

THE JOHNSONIANS.

HISTORY OF A FORGOTTEN SECT
== OF BAPTISED BELIEVERS. ==

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HISTORY

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OF A

FORGOTTEN SECT OF BAPTISED BELIEVERS

HERETOFORE KNOWN AS "JOHNSONIANS"

"As they looked on Peter and John so fearlessly outspoken—and also discovered that they were illiterate persons untrained in the schools—they were surprised; and now they recognized them as having been with Jesus."—Acts c. 4, v. 13.
(*Dr. Weymouth's Translation*).

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INTRODUCTION.

The religious world is already supplied with books and disquisitions in countless numbers and many varieties professing to guide the earnest and intelligent inquirer either into the truth which he ought to believe, if he wishes to be a model Christian, or at least some essential part of that truth. Such books and disquisitions are by no means confined to the librarian's classification of "Theology and Divinity," but are often to be found in works which are marked in the catalogue "History and Science" and "Philosophy." For many years past religious and devout sentiments of a miscellaneous character, but more or less dogmatic or insinuating in tone, have appeared in periodicals and newspapers, in novels and poetry, including the drama.

The ordinary reader in search of Divine Truth, if guided only by his brethren who use the pen, is bewildered amidst the mass of incongruities and knows not what leader to follow, and often in consequence becomes an agnostic—perhaps a genuine sceptic—or gives up the search in disgust and despair.

In introducing another book upon the subject of religion, it therefore seems necessary to say something definite to justify its introduction. For this introduction I, as Editor and Compiler, am solely responsible.

During a half century commencing in or about 1740, one John Johnson, the minister of a small and despised sect of Baptist believers, professed to teach Divine Truth, strengthened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit, in a way more in accordance with Scripture than was followed and taught by any Society with which he was acquainted. Johnson manifested great power and energy in promulgating his doctrines amongst thoughtful people, including some who were already or afterwards became Baptist Ministers. His remarkable influence was not confined to the Pulpit. He had much literary activity. He wrote many letters which were so full of matter as to be almost treatises, and in addition published numerous pamphlets and books which in some cases reached several editions.

During his long life several ministers from time to time adopted his views. At the period of his death there were six or seven bodies of Baptists holding similar doctrines to those which he advocated, and in close communion with his Church in Liverpool and with each other. After his decease the number of such bodies increased, but they never became numerous.

Neither Johnson nor his followers claimed any special illumination or any mission beyond that given to all true Christians to preach the Gospel. They sought to evolve their doctrines from the Bible and the Bible alone, according to the then and still authorised version, and to renounce and disregard, so far as possible, all traditions, peculiarities, glosses, and commentaries, both of Churches and individuals which were not based upon or did not proceed from the same source—*the Bible*.

The ministers in question could lay no claim to Academic training or literary qualifications beyond those which enabled them to express and support their doctrines and arguments in a clear and lucid manner.

Referring especially to two preachers as the most prominent in the sect or community—John Johnson and Robert Reynoldson—the one occupied a pulpit in Liverpool for fifty years, and the other for nearly the same period in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

Their real tenets are not to be found in any Biographical Dictionary, and if they had not left behind them letters and sermons and treatises, some of which were published a century ago and all of which are out of print, their labours would be now practically unknown. I do not say that their teaching would be altogether uninfluential, for I believe that the words of such preachers have wings and continue to live in this world long after they are spoken, and have an effect upon some of the descendants of those who heard them uttered.

I thoroughly believe that such a person as I have indicated in my opening paragraphs, anxious for the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, may derive much benefit and assistance from the study of the lives and writings of the two men, limited and meagre as the record must necessarily be. It may, heaven directed, guide him in his progress through the maze of tradition and controversy, until he reach high and safe ground where he need fear no fall.

Of course, no one is living who heard Johnson, and only a few survive who listened to the teaching of Reynoldson. Amongst those few, I—now a very old man—am one. I am fortunately in possession of the writings of the school, probably to a greater extent than any other individual, and am at perfect liberty to use them as I may think fit. I had the privilege, when young, of hearing Reynoldson preach, and may claim to have had more than a passing intimacy with him. He told me on his death-bed, that he was dying in the faith of the truths which he had preached to me and others.

I have practically confined myself in my record of the sect or community to two ministers already named—John Johnson and Robert Reynoldson. A third minister—Mr. Samuel Fisher—born 1742, died 1803—ought to have been included, but is omitted for reasons which will, I think, justify my reticence. He has already been the subject of an able monograph recently published by Mr. Edward Deacon, of Bridgeport, Con., U.S.A., in a choice volume which embraces nearly all that need be said about him and his career. Though written by one not a Baptist, it is written in a sympathetic Christian spirit as will be seen by his ‘Foreword,’ which I extract, and with which, after some independent research, I substantially agree. “In the absence of almost all written or oral personal recollections of Samuel Fisher, it has been difficult to compile anything more than the briefest sketch of his life and work; but short and imperfect as is this monograph, the hope may be expressed that it will serve in some small measure to preserve the memory of one who tried to fulfil his duty as he saw it, and who in an age of religious intolerance, infidelity, and indifference, was conspicuous for fidelity to his Creator, his conscience, and his convictions.”

After Mr. Deacon’s work it seems unnecessary to quote from Fisher’s sermons, pamphlets, and other writings, the more especially, as I find no discordance or divergence between his opinions and those of Johnson and Reynoldson “*Ex uno disce omnes.*” He was more cultured in style than either of the two, and probably surpassed them both in mere pulpit power. The testimony of Johnson to Fisher’s fidelity to the truth in the published letters of the former, the exchange of pulpits between the two, and their affectionate intimacy go far to prove the identity of their religious tenets apart from his own sermons and writings.

In speaking of identity of opinion amongst the ministers generally I must not be understood to mean that there was no

individual independence of thought. They had no common creed except the Bible, but some of them spoke out more boldly than others on truths which, apart from special doctrines, might be recognized to advantage in the present day. The Dissenters, said Fisher, speaking in the early part of the nineteenth century, had many privileges in regard to public and private worship, none of these have been or are likely to be taken away. What more does the sincere unpolitical Christian want for the dissemination of his religious views which ought to be his principal if not his sole object? He has the free use of the Scriptures. He can attend Divine Worship when and where he pleases. He can deliver his sentiments on Divine subjects in speech or writing without restraint. If wicked or unreasonable men interrupt, he can appeal to the law for redress.

Fisher was the recognised minister of three Churches at least, Norwich, Newark, and Wisbech, and his itinerant labours wherever he thought he could be useful extended over a large area and were very successful. Mr. Deacon observes that the mantle of Johnson appears to have fallen upon his shoulders. In another way Fisher rendered great service to the cause. After Johnson's death he published two volumes of his letters containing most of those that came into his hands after diligent search—about 160 in number. The series commences in 1760, and continues to the writer's death, or nearly so. Fisher also published twelve sermons preached by Johnson. Certainly the present compilation would have been impossible without such materials at command.

Fisher was a most suitable person to undertake the editing both of the sermons and the letters of Johnson, but he admits that he pruned the latter, not only to avoid needless repetition, but also to leave out the whole or parts of those which he did not think would be interesting to other than the parties themselves. This applies also to a short autobiography of the Author, and probably deprives us of certain facts and inferences which at this distance of time would have been valued by the reader. He, however, adds (and I am sure that we may trust him) that in other respects the alterations are very few and trivial, and the sense is no where altered. The style and language are always preserved, as they were almost peculiar to and characteristic of the author.

This Society was by many, sometimes perhaps in derision, denominated "Johnsonians," from the name of the first preacher; but I am assured that the members of the various churches in

mutual communion at the time never acknowledged the designation as a description of their tenets, nor as rightly applied to them as Churches. At the same time they admitted that they were substantially in accord with Johnson in almost every point of doctrine and practice. There is one qualification to this statement.

Reynoldson towards the end of his ministry, after much careful consideration, introduced views connected with the eternity of suffering which Johnson and Fisher never taught, though it may be forcibly, if not conclusively, contended, that they were only a natural and justifiable development of the doctrines held by him in common with Johnson and Fisher, and which both would have welcomed and adopted if their attention had been seriously drawn to the special subject.

Reynoldson enunciated his views upon this interesting and important subject in five sermons from his own pulpit, and they were published in a cheap form in 1867 under the title "Everlasting Punishment not Everlasting Pain." He took the whole of his Church and others with him ; but as the sermons were not delivered until towards the close of his ministry, and therefore long after Johnson and Fisher's death, I do not propose to deal with the dogma in this work as a tenet of the sect, true as I believe it to be.

It is not my desire to revivify or reconstruct the sect in question—there are too many sects already ; but if the information now imparted shall, by the additional light afforded, awaken some zealous Christians and lead them to reconsider the grounds of their faith and sincerely adopt certain principles, doctrines, and practices now overlooked or only partially recognized, my object and desire will have been attained.

I am satisfied that, by the teaching of the Scriptures, the future of mankind is, under Divine Providence, placed in the hands of men regenerated and gathered into Churches, and that their utmost efforts to propagate the truth in its purity and simplicity, are the divinely appointed means by which the evangelization of the world is to be accomplished.

It is sad to contemplate the low state of many religious Free-Church Societies as now constituted and administered, and the little they have done or are capable of doing, in their present condition, to combat and destroy the opposition, apathy, indifference and mixed motives of that part of the world with which they come in contact in regard to religion, as compared with what they

might accomplish if they had the energy and sincerity of our uncultured Christian brethren working in the dim and murky atmosphere of the eighteenth century.

Why Johnson and his co-adjutors failed to leave behind them a devoted band of followers is perhaps not such a mystery as might at first sight appear ; but it is not my intention to try to trace the cause. The failure may be only superficial and temporary. God's purposes are not limited by centuries of time. We have all heard of rivers and streams which after leaving their respective sources have burrowed underground for longer or shorter distances. This may be the case in the present instance. If it be a pure stream or rivulet flowing from beneath the threshold of God's House, may it not reappear in increased and overwhelming volume ? It seems a small rill to the casual observer, but if the fount be inexhaustible who can predict the result ?

MEMOIR OF MR. JOHN JOHNSON.

John Johnson, the subject of this memoir, was born in March, 1706, at Lostock, a hamlet in the parish of Eccles, only a few miles from Bolton, Lancashire. Lostock was then and still is a very small place: its population does not now much exceed a thousand. It had a limited coal-mining industry, but was chiefly agricultural or pastoral in character. Johnson died in March, 1791, and his life therefore covered, like John Wesley's, much the greater part of the eighteenth century.

Johnson's father is described by Mr. Samuel Fisher, to whom we are indebted for many details incorporated in our narrative, as a *peasant*. He also says that he was in a *menial* situation. This double description is rather perplexing, as "menial" implies domestic "service." There seems to be no doubt that the father was a householder with his family around him, having leisure enough to exercise control over his children, and to give them a certain amount of education—that he could also assemble his neighbours in his domicile for conversation, probably in evening hours, and that he had his Sundays at his own disposal. I think that he was what we should now call a very small farmer who supported himself and family by honest labour, having, at the best, very limited means. He appears to have been a man who truly feared God, who made the Holy Scriptures the subject of his constant meditation and the only rule of his conduct, and who filled his different relations in life with propriety and honour.

Under such influences it is natural to suppose that the son was brought up in the strictest habits of industry and economy, and such was the fact. From these habits he never swerved in after life. He was ever thorough in whatever he undertook to do, and content with the simplest fare, if only wholesome, and to the plainest dress, if only suitable to his position in life. In money matters he never sought for more than a competency, and had no ambition to raise himself in the social scale—certainly not by "occasional conformity" as was then required by the law.

His moral and religious training by both parents was of still more importance. It was almost Jewish in its strictness and would seem to have found in the lad one who, like the prophet Jeremiah, was consecrated from the womb and ready to respond willingly to all their teaching. Mr. Fisher, who knew him well in the middle and latter part of his life and was the depositary of his confidences, tells us that from the first dawn of reason John never could remember being at any time guilty of disobedience to his parents, of using a profane expression, of speaking an untruth, or of doing an action to the injury of another. He never went to any sports or public amusements, nor did he ask liberty for any such purpose, knowing his father's bitter aversion to them. He was taught never to make a promise of any kind without a serious intention to perform it, nor unless there was, in the common course of events, a probability of his being able to fulfil his obligation.

He was likewise taught to revere the Lord's Day, as Sunday was then commonly called by his friends, and constantly to attend both public and private worship. He was never suffered to play or take walks for recreation upon the Sabbath, and he scarce remembered indulging in forbidden recreation on that day.

We are obliged to Mr. Fisher for introducing the words "scarce remembered," for by admitting a probable lapse in his conduct now and then, it modifies the almost too perfect picture of a good child. It is hard to believe that John who it is asserted (no doubt truly) possessed a more than common degree of natural vivacity did not occasionally infringe the rule and gather sticks on the Sabbath, or commit some similar offence against the Levitical Law which he was instructed to follow. The boy was remarkably precocious and had through life an extraordinary memory. When about four years of age he began to speculate as to the frame of the world. Who made it? Whether it would fall? And if not, why not?—and as he gradually learnt the truth about the creation from the Bible and his natural instructors, his musings filled him with a kind of awe. His pensiveness at that period attracted the attention of his family who, not appreciating the cause of his abstraction, sought for means to divert and amuse him.

When about eight years of age his religious views expanded, though still, of course, vague and indefinite. He understood that he was a sinner and recognised Jesus Christ as a Saviour who had come into the world in human form and began to pray to God according to the light he possessed. The good work had

begun in his heart and it was not to be retarded or diverted during the next four or five years. According to his capacity and opportunities, by reading, meditation, and conversation, he advanced materially, and at the age of thirteen was able to talk with some consistency on different subjects of a moral and divine nature and, relying on his wonderful memory, (for Cruden's Concordance, the frequent refuge of the destitute, was not then in existence), could quote passages from the old and new Testament with singular pertinence, and repeat with great correctness the sermons he heard delivered.

Before he enjoyed peace of conscience, the youth was startled and dismayed one night by a storm accompanied by thunder and lightning, and a deluge of rain of so severe a character as to leave behind it, in the neighbourhood, the record of its date—the 18th December, 1720. This awful hurricane aroused in him a distressing apprehension of his future state in the event of his life in this world being cut short by its violence, and deepened his religious impressions and anxieties. Soon afterwards he had a dream in which he fancied that he saw his name written on the scroll of the condemned. This also troubled him at the time, but it is only right to say that in manhood he disavowed all confidence in dreams, and repudiated the idea of there being anything in them supernatural or premonitory.

As part of Johnson's early religious experience, we may quote from a letter which he wrote, very late in life, in answer to an enquiry as to his manner of worshipping God before the Lord had brought him out of darkness. He says: "To this I cannot make reply. I was so young at the time, and it is so long since that I do not well remember. This time 68 years, I was under the operation mentioned, Romans 7, 9-10, and at that time I was not 15 years of age. But I can remember that I never was taught to profane the holy name by rambling over prayers as children commonly do. But I remember once my father pointing me to Matt. 6, 9-13, and bidding me to get it by heart, but that I did not need for I had it by heart long before, by hearing other children profane it. I cannot say that I ever thought praying to be serving God, but I thought it to be a thing necessary, and I thought I would study the Psalms to see how David prayed. But when my eyes were opened I then saw that whatever I had done was simply amusement." It was not long before it was the pleasure of God to bring him into liberty by directing him to a consideration and clear view of the way in which salvation is to be obtained. So

soon as he was enabled to believe it with all his heart he found rest. After mature thought he proposed himself as a candidate for baptism and Christian fellowship to the church of which his father was a member. His account gave general satisfaction, and he was baptised in March, 1721, in which month he was fifteen years of age. After his baptism two ministers laid hands upon him and prayed. "This," says Johnson himself, "was a very melting, refreshing season to my soul, and I was abundantly strengthened to believe I should be blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. Not expecting miraculous gifts (which in these days are not necessary), but such a measure of the anointing as it should please God to bestow in order to the enjoyment of his love, to perseverance in his grace, and to glorify him in the Church."

It must, however, be recorded that for some time after his baptism he had at intervals distressing doubts concerning his everlasting state. These were gradually removed as his understanding became more enlightened, and after he was twenty years of age he had not a single hesitation respecting this vitally important matter—his own salvation and sonship.

As to the acquirements of the youth at this period of his life we think he responded to the impulse given him by his parents, and perhaps his pastor, in a remarkable way, and was placed in a most favourable position for the formation of his character. His education, from the force of circumstances, appears to have been almost exclusively moral and religious, but we have no doubt he was honest, steady, and industrious from the earliest period when those qualities could be expected to have come into play. If he had been limited to the humblest occupations (the influence of the Bible apart) he would have realized the old ideal:

"If I were a cobbler I'd make it my pride,
The best of all cobblers to be;
If I were a tinker no tinker beside,
Should mend an old kettle like me."

He, however, entertained the lowest opinion of his own acquisitions in secular matters. At this time, writing when he was 54 years old to a gentleman who wished to become his correspondent, he thus speaks of his early education. "What can you propose from a correspondence with a person brought up in an obscure way, in a very mean employ, and who never had the advantage of learning, business, books, or conversation to improve his genius or refine his taste, or any other thing that constitutes or improves

the scholar or the gentleman? I only learned to read from my parents in a country way, and never went to school, except for a few weeks to learn the use of the pen." Perhaps there is a slight excess of modesty in this statement, made in 1760, but we shall have occasion to discuss the question of Johnson's education subsequently.

We shall better understand the training of the young man before he had attained to fixed principles, and became a teacher of the Gospel by using his own language.

We must, however, state in the first instance that a certain confession of faith had been compiled by a body of ministers of standing and recognised and acknowledged by numbers of congregations. From this confession we extract the following articles as pertinent to the subject.

ARTICLE THIRD OF GOD'S DECREE.

"God hath decreed in Himself from all eternity, by the most wise and holy council of His own will, freely and unchangeable, all things whatsoever come to pass, yet so as thereby is God neither the Author of Sin nor hath fellowship with any therein."

"Although God knoweth whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions, yet hath he not decreed anything because he foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions."

ARTICLE FIFTH OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

"Although in relation to the Foreknowledge and Decree of God, the first cause, all things came to pass immutable and infallibly, etc. The almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God so far manifest themselves in his Providence that his determinate counsel extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sinful actions both of Angels and Man, and this not by a bare permission."

As to this confession of faith, Johnson says "my father had acquaintance with a set of men who acknowledged it in so many words. They were persons of good intellects with whom I frequently heard him debate the point, when I had not judgment to distinguish truth from error, but I had understanding to know and remember what I heard." He elsewhere says that his inability to judge correctly occasioned him for a long time anxiety and unhappiness. Many years subsequently he published in books

and pamphlets particulars of his discussions not only those when his father was living and present, but also those which he had alone with ministers and others. These discussions embraced the Articles referred to, and other matters. Johnson's mode of treatment is highly controversial and as his views, at least on the most important points in question, are stated definitely hereafter, it seems unnecessary to introduce them into this biography.

To proceed with the narrative. When twenty years of age Johnson was solicited by the minister of the Chapel to take part with him in the ministry, but he at first declined on the ground of his own insufficiency. Being repeatedly pressed by both the minister and the people (and no doubt by his father especially) he consented, and for a time expounded some parts of the Scripture to their great satisfaction. He afterwards, during the life of the pastor, assisted him in a more definite and public manner. His connection with the Chapel was destined to be brief and painful. Within a year his father, who had been to him a kind friend and an able counsellor, died. In the course of another year his minister also died, and the young man was left to his own resources as sole pastor. Shortly afterwards certain persons laid claim to the Chapel, which was not properly vested in Trustees. We have no particulars of the nature and validity of the claim. It may have been a valid one from a legal point of view, but the sad result was that the place was deserted and the Church broken up, notwithstanding the efforts of the youthful minister to promote peace and unity among the worshippers and re-establish a Christian Church.

The reliable facts connected with the period—ten or twelve years—between the time when his services were no longer needed at Lostock and when he went to Liverpool in 1740—are scanty, but were unquestionably most important to him as a preparation for future usefulness. He did not enter into close fellowship with any Church, says Mr. Fisher, but preached to different congregations in the neighbourhood whenever his services were desired or needed. We do not know how he maintained himself. His sermon-fees would we should suppose be small indeed, if any. He must have had recourse to hard work of some kind (what kind we do not know), but he was a stalwart man and healthy, and whatever he undertook he would do cheerfully and efficiently.

During these years of forced pastoral repose it was impossible for the mind and character of such a man to remain quiescent and stationary. Where there is spiritual life there must be growth,

and Johnson was an illustration of this truth. His spare moments were devoted to a study of the Scripture and meditation and prayer, and an important change took place in his opinions and sentiments with regard to certain doctrines. Every student acquainted with the evangelical controversies of the eighteenth century knows that the two contending parties were the Calvinists and Arminians. The early life of Johnson, as we have seen, had led him to know much of both bodies, and in youth he had identified himself with the latter as opposed to the former body. There was now to be a vital revolution of a permanent character in some of his views. He says "Hitherto I must confess I had rather examined the Scriptures to find arguments against the doctrine of election than to discover the truth. By education I was so bigoted to the doctrine of universality that I conceived it was impossible to overturn it, and that nothing plausible could be advanced in support of the opposite sentiment. But upon having frequent conversation with the people with whom I was now particularly acquainted and who held the doctrine of eternal and personal election in a very scriptural and perspicuous light, I began to suspect that the ground upon which I stood was not altogether tenable. It was, however, a considerable time before I could relinquish my former opinion concerning the indiscriminating love of God to mankind. I saw plainly that God is good unto all, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. This I observed was a truth so often repeated and expressed in terms so strong and positive that I could not withhold my assent. Yet, again, there were other passages which as clearly pointed out a peculiarity in the love and special grace of God equally as numerous and palpable as the former, the spirit of which I could not resist. But how, or in what light, to admit both and yet preserve the true harmony and consistence of the whole divine system was the great difficulty. In this dilemma, whenever I found passages I did not understand in reference to this point, I took the same method Hezekiah did in regard to the letter (Isaiah 37, 14). I placed the Bible before me and prayed earnestly to the most high God to enlighten my understanding. I read the passages again and again, cried with all the powers of my soul to him who alone could give light (Psalm 34, 11) and the Lord was pleased, in His good time, to satisfy my mind fully concerning the truth and consistency of these two doctrines which before I had conceived to stand in direct opposition to each other ; but without the appendages which had been supplied by human logic, such as eternal

reprobation ; the decree of sin, etc., etc., which had galled and distressed my mind almost to distraction."

The particular views of divine truth which Johnson entertained will be found in the subsequent part of this book. He was always receptive and open to fair argument and criticism, and ready to give to any earnest enquirer the bases of his belief, in much detail if necessary. "Search the Scriptures" was his constant cry to all. Perhaps it may be as well here to quote Mr. Fisher's well-considered opinion of Johnson's views on the Trinity. "He deemed the doctrine of a Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity as the glory of the whole gospel and the foundation of all evangelical truth. He, however, highly disapproved of what some writers had said about eternal filiation and eternal procession as obviously militating against the divine Unity, and an attempt to explain what is infinitely above the comprehension of every created mind. He always chose to speak of the Three as their distinct characters are now made manifest in the dispensations of his grace. The Father God invisible—the Son God manifest in the flesh—the Holy Ghost God dwelling in his people, etc. In a word his judgment was that in the immensity of Jehovah's nature there is such a distinction as is imported by the terms Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but that it is the excess of arrogance for any man to attempt to define it by reason or to trace it to its origin. It is a truth clearly stated as a matter of fact ; but too sublime for human investigation."

Mr. Fisher says that "strictly speaking Johnson was neither a Calvinist nor an Arminian, but what he saw in either of those systems which appeared to him consistent with the meaning of Scripture that he adopted."

The conclusions at which Johnson had arrived by the time he had reached 34 or 35 years of age, and before he was called to Liverpool, were never essentially departed from or varied, except in one or two instances which he refers to in his letters, and they were held and promulgated by him with the tenacity, perseverance, and energy which were his characteristics. He soon found that the novelty of his tenets led him into difficulties and caused unpleasantness with other ministers and that (to use his own language) he became to them a speckled bird.

As to his treatment by ministers generally he observes in reference to a poem which he animadverted upon in one of his published works "Evangelical Truths Vindicated," "the poem was put

into my hand by a professed friend of mine with a very solemn entreaty that I would write an answer to it which I did in the form of a letter to the person of whom I had it ; but in the meantime I sent the book referred to to some ministers who heretofore had professed friendship for me, but they all agreed to bear a testimony against my heresy by sending the books back, and so prepossessed the mind of my friend that when the piece was ready for the press—and I wrote him to encourage the sale—he never thought fit to return me an answer.”

Johnson certainly, on one occasion at least, did not improve his relations with these ministers by refusing to attend a recognition service on the ground that he did not approve of the sentiments of the person to be recognised.

About the time he left Lostock he married. We do not know the maiden surname of Margaret his wife, nor any particulars about her prior to her marriage, but we know from one of her husband's letters, written long afterwards, what were his requirements, which we trust and believe were all fulfilled in the lady of his choice. The letter is worth extracting.

“ When I was young I earnestly prayed to the Lord to guide and direct me either to a single or married state as might be most to his glory. At length I came to this determination that I did not see that I was called to any work or fixed in any station with which a married state might interfere to hinder my usefulness, and that it would really be more for my comfort. Then I directed my prayers to my God if it was His pleasure to point out and give me a wife. I remember a minister once gave me this advice. 1. If ever you choose to marry think twice before you speak once. I approved his counsel so well that I determined to think three times, for as I had determined not to marry for mere sensual gratification nor for earthly riches, but for honour (as I sometimes expressed it in those days) I would think first to look for a king's daughter. 2. If I could live with sincere mutual affection. 3. If I had a prospect of living comfortably in the world. It is a very serious affair and ought to be entered into with great reverence. Baptism is the most tremendous. Marriage is the most awful concern that any man can engage in of anything material and earthly.”

We have no doubt that she was indeed the daughter of a king—without, however, a dowry of earthly riches—that there was mutual affection, and his letters show that she identified herself

with his views. She sometimes introduced questions of her own to the correspondent for the time being, jointly with that of her husband, unites in love to many of the brethren, and occasionally signs her name "Margaret Johnson" jointly with that of her husband. Their ages were alike within a few days. When she dies, two years before her husband, his reticence is most touching. He tells Mr. Fisher how he would have liked to go with her, but that it was not so ordered.

In or about the year 1740 Johnson received an invitation from a Baptist Church in Dale Street, Liverpool, to become their minister. He accepted the invitation provisionally, and preached to them for a time, but when asked to become their permanent pastor, he objected on the ground that, in his opinion, some of the members were not perfectly cordial in regard to the doctrines which he preached. He always considered that it was dishonourable to accept the invitation of a party only in a society and thereby occasion a separation. He was fully persuaded that the Lord had in His word fixed a stigma on all such as were either the authors or abettors of schism in the Church. He publicly avowed his sentiments on this point, and as a complete answer to his objection, a document was drawn up detailing his views which received the signature of every member. Under these circumstances he accepted the call, and was soon afterwards publicly ordained, by prayer and the laying on of hands, in the presence of several ministers and messengers from other churches.

He sustained this office amongst them for seven years, when the opposition made to his doctrine by several individuals was again revived with so much violence that those who embraced his views of the teaching of Christ saw the necessity of a final separation. Deplorable as was the event it had now become absolutely inevitable.

Mr. Johnson's friends, believing that they had a superior claim to the Meeting-house, and could eject the discontented by legal process, suggested the propriety of taking proceedings with that object. Johnson, although he himself believed they had a legal right, strenuously opposed an appeal to the law to decide such a point on, amongst other grounds, that it would be abhorrent to their avowed principles as the subject of a Kingdom which is not of this world—that the public would thereby be led to conclude that they were contending for property and power when in fact their sole object was of the highest nature—nothing less than the

truth as it is in Jesus. Of course he supported his views with many texts of Scripture, and his followers relinquished all further contest about the right of possession. A new Chapel was speedily erected in Stanley Street, and in that building he continued to preach until his death.

How the Dale Street people treated him during his pastorate with them, as regards his maintenance, may be told in his own language, written in 1760.

“ When I had been here about three years, in which time or thereabouts, I had three children born, and in the time had much sickness in the family, I followed a little business but it was of little consequence. The people made what collection they pleased and gave me ; but it was not half what would maintain my family in such a place as Liverpool for they did not think themselves obliged to maintain my family, nor did I expect it from them. They never cared to enquire whether I could live, but I was blamed if I did not make a handsome appearance, I never laid my case before them. I knew there was a party so fierce against me that they were waiting all advantages to reproach me. I knew that if I could not support my family without any complaint or asking further assistance from them I should be accused of idleness, carelessness, and making my family burdensome to them. I knew if I was much engaged in business I should be accused of being set upon the world. I knew some of them would almost be guilty of anything to drive me away. Yet I knew that if I offered to leave them of myself they would reproach me to the last degree. Thus my case stood—my circumstances sinking and had not of my own to sink ; my family likely to increase. I could not leave the people nor could place any dependence on them. Nothing but earnest concern for the Glory of my God, and desire to be useful in the cause of my Lord could have induced me to launch into business in the town and in this station, nor did any living creature know with what reluctance I did it. I could appeal to my Heavenly Father. ‘ The zeal of Thy House hath eaten me up.’ At present—1760—my friends contribute a sufficiency for my family, I want nothing. I have only one son who is a few days past 14.”

Johnson, we see, in the early part of his ministry at Liverpool was driven to seek and find secular work. What description of work it was he does not tell us. Liverpool was rapidly increasing in population and shipping, he was a good arithmetician, and pro-

bably, through one or more of the friends who clung to him, he found employment in the office or yard of some builder or merchant. Little, probably, did his opponents know or care for the results of their parsimony in depriving him of books. What was his library? It might have been as scanty as Bunyan's. Certain books he must have had. His means of procuring them except by borrowing or receiving them as presents must remain a mystery. He seems to have been fairly acquainted with the literature of the dissenters and those works especially of a controversial kind which supported or opposed his religious views. He mentions expressly in his published writings, Calvin, Knox, James Harvey (the author of "Theon and Aspasia"), John Norton of New England, George Kendall, John Goodwin, Paul Bains, Tho. Edwards, Wm. Law Hussey, Dr. Gill as a commentator, Brine and Wright; but so far as we can tell, of the English Classics on our own shelves current during his life he may have been entirely ignorant. We find no allusions to Milton, Dryden, Bacon, Swift, Addison, Dr. Samuel Johnson, Bishop Butler, or William Cowper.

Dr. Samuel Johnson published his Dictionary in 1755, but the pastor seems to have used the prior one of Bailey, at least for the meaning of certain words such as "amusement and reprobation" as the reader will notice. But Johnson's omission to allude to the works just mentioned is not so remarkable as the absence of any reference in his letters to passing events of great historical importance. It is impossible to believe that living in a large town it was the result of ignorance on his part. The century was teeming with facts which must have come to the knowledge of a man so intelligent. Perhaps Mr. Fisher may have pruned the letters and sermons with a too unsparing hand. No notice is taken by him of the failure of the Schism Act by the death of Queen Anne, which saved the Dissenters from the certainty of persecution—the apathy and indifference to religious feuds of Walpole the premier and the two Hanoverian Kings, George the first and George the Second, which practically favoured the dissemination of dissent—the rebellions of 1715 and 1745—the establishment of the Indian Empire by Clive, except a bare reference to the execution of General Sulley by the French, and the secession of the American Colonies. We think the truth as to this reticence is not so much that the pastor was ignorant, as that he was so obsessed by the vast importance of his sacred

duties that he cared not to occupy the smallest portion of a sheet of paper by recording or criticising any secular events however important.

Johnson was a controversialist—a real combatant—and to a great extent necessarily so, if he would advocate the truth, as he understood it, in the face of those who claimed to occupy exclusively the field of Divine knowledge and were not unscrupulous in their attacks either upon himself or his teaching when opportunity offered.

We think, however, it must be admitted by his admirers that although to use a well-known phrase he always “held his own,” his style was sometimes such as would not be approved by the present day reader, and indeed must be condemned, notwithstanding it was customary enough amongst contemporary polemical disputants, some of high ecclesiastical rank such as Bishop Warburton. His language certainly seems now and then to be unnecessarily coarse. It was a case of hard hitting all round. Now-a-days the bludgeon, with its knocks and bruising propensities, has been exchanged for the rapier, with perhaps a little blood upon its point.

It will be found by the reader that Johnson has himself something important to say upon the subject. He realized the existence in the religious world of a spurious charity both in thought and expression which he hated, and felt bound to protest against to the uttermost. Perhaps a question arises whether the change which has taken place in recent years in the mode of attack and defence is altogether an improvement. Take one instance as an example of what we mean—Macaulay’s polished but bitter attack upon the Revd. Robt. Montgomery, the author of a poem called “The Omnipresence of the Deity,” in the Mid-Victorian Era. Was it really better from a Christian standpoint than the coarse mode of the previous century? It was at least as cruel. Can we call it *Suavis in modo*? Johnson could not have imitated the style of the famous critic even if he would. The peasant’s son was too much in earnest to pick and choose his words, and too oblivious of their vulgarity, as gauged by polite society. *Fortis in re* was his motto.

Rural people in those days were not fastidious in their choice of language and personal habits. In a small village, like Lostock, everything judged by modern rules, was vulgar. Oaths and strong expletives were as common amongst the humbler classes to which

Johnson belonged as the spots of dirt and grease upon their clothes, and that he was freer from such taint than others of his class is only to be ascribed, under God, to his training and religion. A true Christian must be essentially a gentleman.

But let us hear what Johnson had to say in justification of his mode of preaching and teaching.

“What is my concern? What is my desire? Only that I may be faithful to Him that sent me and to every soul to whom I am sent. And I cannot possibly be faithful without using hard sayings and so must be accounted harsh, censorious, and uncharitable. When the Lord was pleased to call me out of darkness, he did not call me asleep, but gave me life from the dead, and now I have been exercised in His school above fifty years, I do know the difference of the two seeds, Christ and Belial, light and darkness, life and death, flesh and spirit, and forasmuch as I certainly know that deceptions are almost universal among the religions of the world I cannot be faithful unless I point out their deceptions. I cannot name the persons, but I often name the things in such a light that the persons know it themselves that are described; so they know it is spoken against them. And when a hypocrite hears a hypocrite described he knows that he is that hypocrite, but he rages to hear his nakedness discovered, and thinks to deaden the noise of his own conscience by crying out horrid, cruel, censorious, presumptions, assuming the judgment seat, etc. And these clamours frequently have the desired effect—the ringing of the bell when the bees swarm. But who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead? I hope to live and die pure from the blood of all men which I cannot do if I do not point out the diabolical delusions with which I know they are bewitched. My Lord spoke out without reserve and they cried out against Him, so did His servants till men gnashed on them with their teeth. All persecution that ever was was not simply for confessing the true God, but testifying against the false. The life of the Gospel cannot be preached without the two-edged sword which makes Christ’s ministers hated of all men for His name’s sake.”

Apart from and in spite of his controversial spirit we have no doubt that Johnson was a thoroughly kind hearted man, and thrilled with emotion of the purest kind when the truth was not in his opinion in danger, or when his sympathies were invoked on any proper occasion. His affection for his family was strong.

His correspondence with his son Isaac, who appears to have been a sort of ne'er-do-well without vice, is a model of what should be written by a Christian father under the circumstances. A letter to a lady unknown (whose temperament was peculiarly sensitive), and his calm and gentle observation respecting one who had long been an esteemed correspondent, but had afterwards changed his views, will go far to prove the amiability of his disposition, if such proof be needed.

It is perhaps worthy of remark that Johnson's life was nearly contemporaneous with that of John Wesley, who was born in 1703—three years only prior to the birth of Johnson. Both died in the same year, 1791. Between the two, in their social positions, as well as in their religious careers, there was a great contrast. Wesley was a gentleman of unimpeachable lineage, highly educated, belonging, as he always asserted, to the Established Church, although with a very practical divergence, as he claimed the whole world for his parish, and as such was an unauthorised missionary who never received recognition by promotion or otherwise from the orthodox body to which he legally belonged. He was educated at Oxford, ordained Deacon and Priest, became a Fellow of Lincoln College, and was Greek lecturer and tutor. He had conversational abilities of a high order which were acknowledged by Dr. Samuel Johnson who desired more of his company than he could obtain, owing to Wesley's numerous engagements.

John Johnson on the other hand, whose birth and want of scholastic education have been already shown, belonged to what Dean Stanley called "the insignificant sect of Baptists."

Wesley was naturally acute and sagacious; so was Johnson—but the superior education and position of the one enabled him to eclipse the other, in the display before the public of wit and irony. Johnson had humour, although it was of a rather elephantine character, and his wit and fancy, if peculiar, were unmistakable in more than one of his productions.

As for noteworthy sayings, Wesley is credited with (amongst other sage remarks) "Passion and prejudice govern the world only under the name of reason," and (perhaps more generally known and appreciated) "Cleanliness is indeed next to Godliness." Johnson also had sage sayings worthy of record, for instance "Some people expect God to empty his ocean into their nutshells," "Men never grow fat by cracking nuts," and again

“God never mends an old garment ; he always makes a new one for his children.” We think this last aphorism contains a real thought which might be expanded to advantage.

John Wesley was a true devotional poet, although inferior to his brother Charles. Johnson was left hopelessly behind. In that department he was about on a par with Bunyan. But perhaps most striking in the way of comparison, Wesley, when he died, left a highly organised community which has continued to flourish to the present day under his name and slightly modified conditions. Johnson in this respect was nowhere. He believed in the Apostolic constitution of individual churches, and made no attempt to combine them into one by parchment, red tape, and sealing wax.

Johnson's exclusive devotion to the Bible distinguishes him from the mass of teachers. He looked upon the book as the Treasure House in which the King's Jewels were kept, and that it was his duty and pleasure, as one of the Divinely appointed guardians, to keep such Jewels intact and free from the touch of sacrilegious hands. He counted and studied and polished them so as to preserve them from dust and rust and defilement of every kind.

“Jewels that on the stretch'd out forefinger of all time sparkle for ever.”

His qualifications for the task were almost unique. He was not of many moods differing to-day from what he was yesterday. He was no mystic, ascetic or enthusiast, and was, in accordance with Divine teaching, a loyal subject obedient to the government, recognising only the superior rule of Christ. After he had disentangled himself from theological error so far as was possible, by search and research, (always remembering that it is human to err), he took his tranquil way upon his God-chosen path. His necessary ignorance of agnostic science and speculation, so rife at the present day, was a safeguard against wandering into unknown and forbidden lines of thought, and his shrewd common sense and mother wit enabled him under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to deal with vital questions as they arose, in the vernacular. He knew no Hebrew, Greek, and little Latin ; consequently there are no quotations in the dead languages to encumber his utterance or confuse his hearers or readers. It may be interesting here to give a brief extract from one of his letters, written in 1761, showing his classical and general literary attainments. “As to my mistaking the word ‘patience,’ I cannot read the Greek, but I apprehend it is but one word in the original which is rendered in our old

translation 'waiting,' in the present translation, 'patient waiting,' in the margin, 'patience'; in Beza's Latin 'patientem expectationem' and in another Latin version 'expectationem.' I doubt not but that the word may as much intend suffering, for patience generally includes both and in the New Testament is frequently joined with waiting and with hope."

His one great desire was to bring people to the Book. He expressly says in one of his later letters that if he could do this he should be satisfied to write no more, and we have no doubt he spoke in full belief of the efficiency of the Bible and of the operation of the Spirit upon those who studied it with earnestness and humility.

A modern poet has quaintly expressed the same idea, although we do not pledge him or his readers to our obvious application of it.

"You shall no longer take things at second or third hand,
Nor look through the eyes of the dead, nor feast on the spectres
in books;
You shall not look through my eyes either, nor take things from me,
You shall listen to the *Word*."

It will, before concluding our biography, be desirable to give some particulars of Johnson's personality—something to indicate the man himself as he stood for many years in the presence of and in contact with his people. We are indebted to Mr. Fisher, who knew him so well for the details. In stature he was about the middle height. In consequence of a fever in the early part of his life he became near and strong sighted, so that he never required the aid of spectacles. He was always temperate and regular in regard to food; exercise and rest, and thus preserved bodily health and intellectual vigour.

His conversation was agreeable, and on proper occasions facetious; but he was never the subject of excessive levity or fell into a convulsive laugh. He was always ready and kindly responsive, in manner and words, when anything of a distressing or unusually interesting character came to his notice; but was ever sufficiently self-collected to be on his guard against imposture.

In the pulpit his manner was solemn and stately, his attitude grave and graceful, his voice sonorous—not musical, but capable of pathos. His language was plain and simple, and he was never dull and monotonous. His aim was to address the judgment rather than the passions, and to affect the conscience by the medium

of truth conveyed into the understanding. He was inattentive to little ornaments of style and never cared for popularity. His preaching was, after the Apostolic rule, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the spirit and of power.

Yet we think he could have been picturesque if not eloquent if he had thought fit. Treating of his own religious experience when his eyes were first opened to see his true state he could write, referring to the 14th chapter of Hosea, "When the Holy One had cut down the tree to the very root without leaving any stump, and had opened mine eyes to see the beauty of the green fir tree, and had strengthened me by faith to come under His shadow and taste of His fruit, I conferred not with flesh and blood." What Johnson could write he could have spoken fluently.

Thus he continues, retaining his faculties to the last.

His loving and beloved wife dies two years before him, leaving his hearth and home desolate, from a human point of view ; but the aged pilgrim still presses forward in his unvarying course

"Till his thin shadowed temples tell
His live-long journey well-nigh done,
And 'neath his rock-hewn citadel
He seats himself at set of sun."

On March 20th, 1791, he falls asleep in Jesus, exclaiming
"Christ is exalted, and I soon shall be !"

EXTRACTS FROM THE LETTERS OF JOHN JOHNSON.

FOREWORD BY THE EDITOR.

The religious views of Mr. Johnson, as recorded in the following pages, are selected almost exclusively from his correspondence with various individuals and bodies, who requested him to write in answer to their particular enquiries. His letters extend over a period of thirty years, commencing in 1760 and concluding only a short time prior to his decease in 1791. The Editor hopes he has embraced all the most important subjects upon which Johnson held clear and decided opinions, and upon which he based his own faith and hope of Eternal Life, as derived from his study of the Scriptures, assisted by the Holy Spirit. The Editor has been sparing in his notes, which will be found here and there, desiring that the views enunciated should be Johnson's own, and not obscured by any controversial interpolations by another pen. He has not thought it necessary to refer to the sermons and various publications of Johnson, as the letters from which copious extracts have been made are full of matter, and it is believed include every thing that need be said for the information of the reader who is presumed to be fairly acquainted with the Bible, and anxious to know the truth as it is there revealed.

AS TO THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

"Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember us in all things and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you."—1 Cor. 11, 2.

BAPTISM.

I do not make the mode of baptism necessary to salvation. I constantly affirm that it is taking the name of the Lord in vain for any man to be baptised *so long as he does not verily enjoy salvation.*

The baptism of the Holy Ghost never was intended to have any relation to salvation.

Christ never instituted any thing for the sake of the outward mode, but as a means to help our conceptions in spiritual things. These conceptions will be lost if the figure is changed. Why is it of less consequence now under the Gospel whether we strictly attend to the rule prescribed than it was under any other dispensation ?

You speak of the mode or manner in which Baptists (so-called) perform this ordinance. Have you or I any thing to do with the manner in which Baptists, or any other denomination, perform any ordinance ? It is " How did Jesus direct the way ? " " How did the Apostles deliver it ? "

I constantly affirm that it is hypocrisy and taking the name of the Lord in vain for any man to be baptised so long as he does not verily enjoy salvation. But this I confess, that to be a disciple or follower of Jesus Christ it is absolutely necessary, with the deepest reverence, to mark his steps, to attend to the spiritual design, and cautiously to avoid deviating to the right hand or the left, and not to look at any of his precepts as matters of indifference or as left undetermined to the discretion of men.

The Baptism of the Holy Ghost never was intended to have any relation to salvation, but I suppose for want of attention you confound the promise of the Father with regeneration.

You signify that no outward mode of performing any duty under the Gospel is essential to the right performance thereof, if done *with decency*. Christ never instituted anything for the sake of the outward mode, but as a means to help our conceptions in spiritual things, and for His disciples to confess their faith in those spiritual blessings which proceed from Himself. He appointed His ordinances to bear the most perfect resemblance, but that use is certain to be lost if the figure is changed. But why is it of less consequence now under the Gospel whether we strictly attend to the rule prescribed than it was under any other dispensation ? I confess any mode of men's invention may be done with decency in their eyes ; but the question is whether coming before God under pretence of performing his ordinances and doing it after the precept of men will be esteemed *decency* in His eyes. If you mean the mock ordinance of men instituted in the room of the ordinance of Christ, I am not ashamed to acknowledge that I equally esteem infant baptism and adult baptism as perfectly anti-Christian in whatever dress either of them can possibly appear. The baptism commanded by Christ and preached by His apostles was, and is foreign to either of these as light is to darkness.

They who speak of it to purpose never use the insipid phrase "adult baptism" but sacred language "believers' baptism" (Matthew 16, 16; Acts 8, 12-37).

If we hear a baptised person speak of his views it is commonly in such expressions as these, viz.: It is a Scripture ordinance and we ought to comply with it. It is the command of Christ and we ought to obey it. Christ led us the way and we ought to follow Him. If Christ Himself submitted to it well may we submit to it. I found the love of Christ constrained me to conform to His example. I thought it my duty to conform to such a pattern. I ought not to scruple to condescend to that which my Lord condescended to, etc., etc. Thus they talk as dry as dust as if it had neither life nor savour. An insignificant rite done for doing's sake.

Baptism is a lively figure of the things pertaining to the Son of God and to His Church. His being overwhelmed in deep sufferings—His death—His burial—His resurrection. Our dying to every other thing to put on Christ. Our sins for ever buried with Christ—and rising with Him by faith to a life of true holiness. Passing out of our old state into His kingdom. The washing away of the whole body of sin (Acts 22, 16), ample salvation (1 Peter 3, 21). The baptism of the Holy Ghost (Luke 3, 16). The resurrection of the dead. He that believes experiences the power and waits for the completion of these things, with all his heart confesses them and ratifies this confession by setting his seal to the truth of God by baptism in His name as a fit member of the Gospel Church.

Baptism is a shadow of all that is necessary to be done in a soul to bring him from being dead to sin to be a living member of the Church below.

No man can possibly be a declarative follower of Christ until he follows him in the ordinance of baptism. This is demonstratively evident in the nature of the thing; *it is the ordinance of initiation*. In it are represented the very things whereby the soul spiritually enters into Christ (Gal. 3, 27), and whereby he enters the Church, the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12, 13). Therefore no man ever entered the Gospel visible Church without baptism. The shadow and the substance always coincide, *therefore no man can visibly follow Christ in any other ordinance till he first follows Him in this*.

LORD'S SUPPER.

Have you understood the design of the ordinance of breaking bread? As far as I observe most that practice it is either do it as a performance from a spirit of bondage or as a chimerical dream from a spirit of enthusiasm ignorant of its true intention. Some own it as a duty to obey Christ's command. Some pretend to wait for divine communications therein. But ask them in what way they expect the spiritual blessings they reply in the old anti-Christian fashion, we expect it mystically.

The Lord's supper is a lively figure of the continuance, increase, and consummation of these blessings. The breaking of His body and shedding of His blood for our sins (Matthew **26**, 26, 27, 28). 1 Cor. **11**, 23, 24, 25). In the evening, to signify a cessation from labour. Sitting, to signify true rest in Christ. Together, to represent the unity of head and members. Supper, to represent the rich repast. He took the elements as given Him from the Father, to show that all fulness was His to give. He blessed, to show the blessedness to them that receive Him. He gave, to express the freeness of His grace. They took, to show their souls prepared to receive. They eat, they drank, to express their living upon Him in all His fulness. (Col. **1**, 19 ; **2**, 9). and being nourished perpetually by faith in the virtue of their redemption (Eph. **1**, 7), as well as their unshakable hope of feasting with Him in His Father's kingdom. (Mark **14**, 25). They sung, to express everlasting joy (John **16**, 22). Thus they find His flesh meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed. And every believer lives perpetually thereon and finds comfort, refreshment and strength thereby, as sensible and experimental and constant as ever man did by natural food. So His riches dwell in their intellectual powers, and the desires, hopes, comforts, and all their faculties and affections rest in His love until the soul is ripened for the full enjoyment of eternal glory (Eph. **4**, 13-15 ; 2 Peter **3**, 18).

Baptism is a shadow of all that is necessary to be done in a soul to bring him from being dead to sin to be a living member of the Church below.

The Lord's Supper is a shadow of all that is necessary to be done in a believer in order to fit him for the Church above. This needs no proof nor explanation, as I should think it must be familiar to every believer. If the Apostle in these verses did not intend that Baptism was a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and also that every one that is baptised

in the faith does in that ordinance ratify a confession made with his mouth that he believes in the virtue of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and that he himself is verily dead to sin buried with Christ, and risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, I say, if that is not His meaning, I can see no manner of sense in His reasoning. His intention plainly appears to be to dissuade from sin and reasons upon the absurdity of continuing in sin after making such a profession; to believe in a Christ that died to deliver us from sin and to be baptised into His death, thereby declaring ourselves to be dead with Him, and risen with Him to newness of life.

As to the Lord's Supper, it is of equal excellency and importance with the ordinance of baptism, and is equally appointed to all the disciples of Jesus, but a believer may have his lot so cast that he cannot manifest himself to be a follower of Christ. The Lord directs His ordinances to be kept when they can be done in order (Num. 9, 6-12).

Before any man can follow Christ in the Lord's Supper, he must follow Him in baptism or else his walking would be retrograde and turn his most sacred ordinances into mere child's play. Baptism is a representation of our entering in at the door. The Lord's Supper is a representation of our sitting and feasting together as a family settled in a house—the *communion of saints*.

IMPUTATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

As to the imputation of our Lord's righteousness. It is indeed the ground of all my peace with God. I cannot mention redemption, pardon, justification, boldness before the Throne, eternal salvation, etc., but imputation is implied. I know of nothing that we enjoy from God, but what becomes ours by imputation (1 Cor. 1, 30). On the subject of imputed righteousness, Christ stood their mediatorial surety in suffering vindictive punishment for their transgressions. This righteousness of Christ stands in the place of that which the law required from us that was never performed by us. But being performed by the Son of God and imputed to them that believe they are thereby justified and stand as inculpable in the sight of God's justice as if they had performed it in their own persons (Rom. 8, 33, 34).

Was not Christ, in consequence of his becoming man, under a natural obligation to obey the law in its two grand principles, love to God and love to man? And whatever was an obligation.

upon Himself personally could not be a branch of His mediation. If we had stood in God's law, our own obedience had been imputed to us for righteousness (Deut. 6, 25 ; Deut. 24, 13). If the Son of God performed a vicarious obedience for us, then His obedience must be imputed to us for righteousness. But is any such thing contained in the word of God ? If His obedience to the law was imputed to us it is either a perfect or imperfect righteousness. If it had been perfect, then it would have been an unrighteous thing to demand His blood. The law required obedience, in default of which it required the life but never required both. If the obedience of His life had been imperfect the sufferings of His death would have been imperfect also. I know the Apostle calls it "obedience whereby we are made righteous" (Rom. 5, 19), but explains what obedience he intended (Phil. 2, 8).

In speaking of imputation we ought to be very explicit lest we confound our own meaning and particularly in this. Whether we mean that righteousness whereby guilt is removed, or that righteousness whereby we are entitled to participate in the Glory of His throne (Is. 44, 22 ; Psalm 45, 7). In the former nothing can be imputed, but what Jesus performed in the character of mediator in our very place, room, and stead, personating us as our vicar or substitute. In the latter all that Christ is in His excellencies, glories, and perfections is imputed to us for acceptance and exaltation (Col. 2, 10). But in this sense eternal glory is not purchased or acquired by Him, but His *native right*, and the *right* of His Church in consequence of her union with Him. So then the thing imputed is His essential worth, His intrinsic excellency. But as for Christ's obedience to God's holy law I cannot see how it should be imputed to us in any sense whatsoever any otherwise than that perfection of holiness was absolutely necessary to His being and to all His relations, offices, and performances, and holiness of life was absolutely inseparable from the holiness of His nature. The eternally holy and infinitely perfect law of Jehovah never laid any obligation upon man but this, to persevere in and never to swerve from that holiness in which he was created or with which his soul was enriched.

And I cannot see how the hypostatical union (the union of the two natures of Christ in one person) should free the man Christ Jesus from that obligation. It was not for us that He took either the nature or the obligation. It was for the delight of God that He took our nature (Prov. 8, 30 ; Col. 1, 15). The obligation was founded in the being of this nature (Lev. 19, 2 ; Gen. 5), and

it was for him that we were made in the same nature (Prov. 8, 31; Col. 1, 16, 17, 18; Isa. 43, 21). Whatever obligation He entered into wherein was contained the nature of a task or burthen, and whereby He became a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief, or was subjected to the form of a servant, this He did for us as a public person and is imputed as our righteousness. The question is not whether the sufferings of His life are included in the account of His death or of our cross and of our redemption (Heb. 5, 7, 8), or whether the discharging of every obligation which He took upon Him as a public person on our behalf shall accrue to our account (Gal. 4, 45), nor whether everything in every kind and degree wherein He was made sin for us be imputed to us for righteousness? (2 Cor. 5, 21). These things are undeniable. But inasmuch as we stand condemned before God for the violation of the original Holy Law (Matt. 5, 18), the question is whether the Son of God stood and walked before God in perfect conformity to the same law in consequence of His own personal holiness or in consequence of His engagements for us as our own representative? And whether in having failed in our own persons He did fulfil that law as our proxy?—that is His holy walking in conformity to this law being accepted instead of ours and so imputed to us for righteousness? If so, it is impossible to view it in any light but that it will appear—that His blood was shed in vain.

He tells us “My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed.” His flesh is His essence or all the fulness dwelling therein (John 1, 14; Col. 2, 9; 1 Tim. 3, 16). From hence all blessings flow whereby His Church is made rich. His blood is His sufferings or all that He performed in a subjected capacity (Isaiah 53, 11).

From hence all justifying purgative and delivering grace flows whereby His Church is eternally saved. In the one we enjoy all good, in the other we have freedom from all evil.

The Lord Jesus may be considered in a threefold capacity. 1. The Son, the Image, the Delight of God, and to delight in His Father’s will which is His law is essential to His being (Psalm 40, 8). 2. The vital head and husband to His Church, and to delight to communicate all spiritual blessings to her, is essential to this relation (Eph. 1, 22, 23). 3. His suretyship, His mediatorial office, and to do or suffer everything that is incumbent on Him in that office or to perform whatever is necessary to the eternal salvation of His Church, is essential to that undertaking (Hebrews

12, 2). Whatever right the Son hath to the superlative love, the infinite glory and eternal enjoyment of the Father, the same right hath the Church by virtue of her union with Him, and whatever curse, condemnation, and wrath fell upon His people for sin the same fell upon Himself in consequence of His covenant obligation for them (*see* Romans 8, 17; Gal. 4, 7; Isaiah 53, 6; 1 Peter 2, 24); so then eternal life, felicity, and glory which is God himself is made ours in His own person (Psalm 48, 14). Eternal salvation is made ours by His sufferings (1 Peter 3, 18). Call it imputation or otherwise, as words may correspond with ideas. But observe nothing yields positive enjoyment to us but what is natural to Him. Nothing removes guilt and condemnation from us but what was unnatural to Him. Holiness is natural, sufferings unnatural. He communicates no good but what flows from His own fulness, He removes no evil but by sustaining it Himself, nor was it possible for that to be performed on our behalf without which it was impossible for Himself to exist.

SALVATION AND ASSURANCE.

As to the salvation of infants. If we could be so bold as to assert that such a word as this, "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven," is to be understood that infants in their present capacity are in a state of salvation, still we must confess that it is in a way to us unknown; for Jesus has not informed us of any way of salvation but by faith, and it is impossible to know this of infants. We know that baptism is only a sign, therefore it cannot be possibly received according to the true intent by any who have not faith in the thing signified and understanding to discern the Lord's body, the same as in the Lord's Supper. After all, no creature is capable of any ordinance of Christ but by direction of the oracles of God.

There never was a soul that did with all his heart receive the record that God gave of His Son who ever deliberately doubted his eternal salvation and eternal life in Christ.

"God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." Therefore He never reveals Himself in the dark, nor is it possible for Him to perform a spiritual work but what is perfect light. "I am come a Light into the world that whosoever believeth in Me should not abide in darkness." It is impossible for any soul to abide in darkness any farther or any longer than he abides in unbelief. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of

knowledge and the fear of the Lord. Where the spirit of holiness is, it is impossible for that soul to remain ignorant or undetermined in regard to the things that belong to His peace.

“The entrance of Thy words giveth light.” It is impossible for a soul to continue in darkness where the word of truth is received. “Ye are all the children of light, etc.” It is impossible that any person should be a child of light who does not certainly know his relation to the true light. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” No soul enjoys the precious faith who is in uncertainty respecting his hope. The Son of God hath come and has given us an understanding. None can be in Christ who has not understanding to know where he himself is. If any man believes the Gospel with all his heart, he knows he believes it with all his heart. If any soul dwells in Christ and Christ in him, he knows he dwells in Christ and Christ in him. If anyone’s sins are forgiven, he knows that they are forgiven. If any soul is by faith justified before God, he knows that he is justified. If any one has access to the Father through Christ by the Spirit he knows he has access. If any one is possessed of eternal life he knows he has eternal life. If anyone has the spirit of adoption he knows that he is a son of God, wherever these things are they are self-evident (Isaiah **52**, 6, **60**, 16; Ezekiel **39**, 28, 29; Joel **2**, 27; 1 Thess. **1**, 4; 2 Tim. **1**, 12; 1 John **3**, 24; **4**, 16). Yea, see the whole Scripture—as it breathes one language.

Faith in Christ is the source of assurance. Assurance is the product. Therefore believing on the Son of God must be prior to a certainty of salvation; but wherever the former is, a door to the latter is perfectly opened so that the very next step that the soul can take, introduces him thereinto. (Mark **16**, 16; John **3**, 16, 36; **5**, 24; **6**, 40; Acts **10**, 43; **13**, 38, 39; **16**, 31; Roman **10**, 9).

I never talk of salvation being in the power of any man. Yet there never was a soul under heaven that did receive the Gospel with all his heart and exert what capacity he had to embrace the Christ of God, but Jesus gave him power to become a son of God.

I adopt the words of the Apostle “By grace are ye saved.” That grace alone takes place in all the steps of our salvation. But though all salvation is included in grace, all grace is not included in salvation, for salvation and glorification are two different things equally flowing from grace. We did not fall from heavenly glory

but from earthly perfection (1 Cor. 15, 45-49). Now whatever relates to deliverance from the misery brought upon us by sin is salvation, but whatever degree of glory shall be conferred on the Saints more than what was lost by sin is no part of salvation, but a free donation which though it be an event that shall come to us all that are saved, it is not the effect of salvation but flows immediately from the good pleasure of God (Luke 12, 32), and their union to Christ (John 17, 24). It is freely confessed that (as the case now stands with fallen sinners) salvation and glorification are inseparable. But then the question is this. Is salvation the procuring cause of glorification or is the gracious purpose of glorification the impulsive cause of salvation ?

May the Lord direct your hearts unto the love of God that you may press towards the true mark in these four things. 1. That you may be purified and refined from internal pollution. 2. That you may be kept guarded and defended against temptation and the evil of the world. 3. That you may be sanctified by the word and spirit of truth to bear the image of the Son of God. 4. That you may bring glory to His holy name.

It is in the power of every man who hears the Gospel to receive it if he will. Christ did not charge the defect upon the power but upon the *will*. See his words John 5, 40. God never reaped where He had not sown nor required what He had not given. It is true that none can receive it in the life and power, but by the Holy Ghost, but everyone that receives the word in sincerity waits for the blessing till his soul is blessed with the life, the truth, and the grace (1 Thess. 1, 5). This is the declaration of God and no soul ever was disappointed (Romans 10, 12, 13).

God has left nothing undone that is possible to be done in a ministerial way so far as relates to the use of means for the salvation of all—men themselves being judges (Isaiah 5, 5, 4). But the will of men is so refractory, stubborn, rebellious, and incorrigible that all the means that God can use are altogether insufficient until he exert his omnipotence, flaming in love to melt the obdurate heart which when He does the soul comes with all his powers (Jer. 3, 22), otherwise no soul in the universe ever turns to God (Prov. 1, 30, 31). Certainly Christ is under no obligation to exert His almighty power upon all men in spite of all their determined objection. But He will do it to all that the Father hath given Him (John 17, 2). All the rest choose, yea determinately choose, damnation, and will at the last day confess that they had their own choice.

ELECTION.

Concerning Election. Since therein we are chosen to be the Lord's inheritance (Psalm **33**, 12), all needful blessings for time and eternity must be included therein, and since sin and misery have rendered salvation needful it must flow from electing grace. But salvation is not all that proceeds from thence, for salvation has regard only to the fall; but the adoption of children with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places flows through the grace of election (Eph. **1**, 3, 4, 5). Yea, Christ, the first fruits of election, was chosen to be glorified, not to be saved (Isaiah **42**, 1; John **13**, 32).

The Apostle's argument upon election does not regard unworthiness by sin (Romans **9**, 11).

Concerning a clean head and unclean members, you make no difference between Christ setting His love upon impure creatures, and His continuing to love them through their earthly impurity until He had loved them out of it. If we consider men only as they appear in the world, they are impure before they are pure and, in that sense, Christ loves them in an impure state before He can love them in a pure condition (Ezekiel **16**, 4, 8). But when we consider the intimations which God has given us of His divine foresight we cannot conceive of it without order, and that God must foresee all things in their due order. But we know that his people came out of His hand in their purity before any impurity was contracted; consequently it must be so foreseen. If then Christ withheld His love from them in their purity and extended it to them in their impurity, then His love had a beginning and is not essential to Himself, and also the attractive or impulsive cause of His love must arise from sin, and not from Himself. And if so, the foundation of our hope is only a floating wave and all our salvation would end in a dream.

As the love of God and the union of Christ and His Church were above the fall so the grand design was not a preservation of her earthly purity and beauty, nor a bare restoration of nature purity (which is all that can come in under the fall), but a perfection put upon them through partaking of the divine nature in which we shall bear the heavenly image (2 Peter **1**, 4; 1 John **3**, 2).

Inasmuch as Christ loved us originally from Himself (Eph. **1**, 9, 11; **3**, 11), without any regard to good or evil in us, He is more than any other beloved who will not love without something in the object moving them thereto.

And if another should be moved by the distress and misery of an object to pity and compassion and thereby a kind of love should commence, this love, as extorted through compassion, would not be durable. But since the love of Christ took place upon an object given Him (John 17, 6), united to Him (Hebrews 2, 11); and designed to participate in His Glory (Isaiah 6, 2, 3), according to His own good will exclusive of any other motive whatsoever, this love is superlative, perpetual, and eternal.

If Christ and His Church did not spring up together, out of what people was He chosen? Whom did God possess and delight in before all His works? Who is that first born of every creature? And how were all things made by Him and for Him if He was not set up till they were fallen?

How comes the head of the body the Church to be the beginning and to have the pre-eminence, if both creation and destruction were finished before He came?

I had a residence in the bosom of the Father before the world began—4,000 years before the Son was begotten. From the time He took my nature I was personated in the Son, before the Father; 1,700 years before the Spirit possessed Me. I have lived in the Spirit fifty-four years.

Those that God is pleased to call by His grace know no more than others what is the special purpose of God until it be spiritually manifest in them. But being drawn by the Spirit of the Lord their hearts are impressed with desire after the blessing and, leaving the secrets of God with Himself, they attend to His word, believe what He has said, and wait upon Him till He gives the blessing into their hearts and then they can cry "Abba Father." And it is this way of preaching that they may be saved through believing, that they may repent, etc.

Some persons are sadly frightened at the thought of a door being opened of a possibility for the salvation of all who perhaps could not tell which way such an opening would affect the Gospel system. It is for fear that God should not keep the door shut, the Calvinists bind him to decree the sin and damnation of the bulk of mankind. But they that understand the Gospel in truth have no such fears. They can with sacred pleasure see the universal goodness of God extended to the utmost to every creature and yet behold the transcendent glory of sovereign grace, so far above all created perfection that it never was possible for a door to be opened

for an entrance into the mansions of glory to any but God's elect. It is impossible to know our election until we are effectually called (1 Thess. 1, 4, 5).

God's elect are not dealt with as servants or merely as creatures, but as sons. Chosen in Christ (Eph. 1, 4) ; One with Christ in ever lasting covenant (Isaiah 45, 9) ; Born of God, partakers of the divine nature (1 Peter 1, 4) ; Hence they are effectually brought to God (John 6, 37, 44 ; 17, 2 ; Eph. 2, 10).

REPROBATION.

In many places where the most abominable traditions of Rome have been exploded new traditions have been received from the most zealous opposers of the old, so that it has been said that if a man did flee from a lion a bear met him. From this source (tradition) sprung the common custom of joining together these two words Election and Reprobation. There is no ground for this conjunction in the word of God, for Election has no proper connection with Reprobation, neither is Reprobation set in proper opposition to Election. They spring from different fountains, and have no relation to or proper necessary dependence on one another.

Election is a special choice wherein a person is distinguished from all others and appointed to some peculiar employment or station from which all others are excluded. So the King is the elect of the nation from which all others are excluded, but they are not therefore reprobate, for reprobation is a casting away as dross or rejecting a thing which upon trial is found base or vile, for which reason it is degraded and cast out. Whereas the subjects of a kingdom enjoy all rights and privileges in their proper stations as much as the king does in his (unless they forfeit them by breaking the laws), nor does any man sustain any loss whatever by the king's exaltation to the crown. So a wife is the elect of her husband, and all other women are excluded, yet no other woman sustains the least damage by her marriage. Such is the case in every choice which God has made. In the choice of Abraham it was no loss, but a blessing to the rest of the world. Likewise the election of his children in Christ, those that are excluded from that near relation to God are not thereby deprived of any blessing to which they had a right as creatures—or in other terms, their being left out of the number of peculiar favourites does not in any sense exclude them from the universal love and goodness of God. . . . Therefore when the Holy Ghost states the difference between

the seed of the promise and them that have no right thereto, he does not make use of the opprobrious term "reprobate," but his words are fitly spoken. "The Election and the rest." And inasmuch as God alone is the author of Election, and the creature alone is the author of his own reprobation, the two words cannot be joined together with any propriety.

ORIGINAL SIN.

Adam was made the head and sovereign lord of the whole creation, which he held by the tenure of obedience to his God, so that upon him depended the continuance or the total extirpation of all created things. He sinned and brought destruction on himself and on every being under his dominion. But Christ taking the whole thing into his own hand makes an end of that sin and all its effects for ever.

The sin of Adam never has the least connection with our personal sins nor has the punishment thereof the least connection with our personal sins (Romans 5, 12, and other verses.)

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men for that all have sinned.

Sin entered into the world by Adam, and thereby death seized all his posterity, forasmuch as he was the head of all nature and death having seized himself he could not convey a living nature to his seed. All sinned in him not actually but federally as the king who breaks peace all his subjects become involved in war, they all fell under death brought by his sin. Adam, after sin, could not convey a living nature to his seed. All died in consequence of his sin. *God alone is immortal* (1 Tim. 6, 16). Death passed upon all. The soul of man was not created immortal. He was neither mortal nor immortal till sin made him mortal (Genesis 3, 19) "In the sweat of thy face, etc."

Infants who have no understanding in them can have no sin. There can be no sin as there can be no law to them. Where there is no law there can be no transgression. None are ever accused who have not conscience. Nevertheless (v. 14) death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of Him that was to come. But notwithstanding the non-imputation of personal sins yet death reigned in consequence of the first sin.

Adam was a figure of Christ as being the first born sovereign of the world, a husband, father, etc., But what appears here intended, is a covenant head in whom his children should stand or

fall, and as all his offspring fell by his sin, so all Christ's children stand in His righteousness, all their blessedness in Him and not in any wise of themselves (v. 15). Having fixed the doctrine of the sin of one being the whole cause of the mortality that is in the world, and formed the comparison between the Destroyer and the Restorer He now comes to show the contrast, how far the salvation of the latter exceeds the sin of the former,—that the gift is not to be measured by the offence. For the grace of God, and the gift by grace by the one Man Christ Jesus hath abundantly gone beyond all the breach made by Adam (5, 16) The gift beyond is explained (John 1, 29).

But the free gift has extended to many, even our personal offences, to justify His elect from all their sins.

The sin of Adam brought a general condemnation upon all His dependents—but our sins are the offences of individuals and bring a distinct condemnation upon every conscience, from which they are justified by Christ (1 Cor. 15, 47). Verse 17 : Here He comes not only to the number of offences done away in Christ, but to the greatness of the gift and abundance of the grace both of the depth of deliverance of our soul from His own sin, which saves from a greater depth of misery than all that was introduced by Adam's crime, and the life in which all the saints shall reign as far exceeds what Adam lost as heaven exceeds the earth, as God exceeds man.

Verse 18 : Here he returns to the former subject, the condemnation by Adam, and justification therefrom by Jesus Christ to that life they had lost. *Not to Eternal Glory for that will not be to all men.*

Verse 19 : For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

All the world were made sinners by one man's disobedience, and by the obedience of Christ (Psalm 2, 8) not by His active obedience (as many talk) all the world shall be made righteous from that sin, and it is true that as all Adam's seed were lost in him, so all Christ's spiritual seed stand righteous in Him for ever.

In all these verses I see nothing that favours what is called original sin. It is what God never taught, and no man who holds it can have just conceptions of the truth of God.

In Adam all sinned not actually but federally, and the curse which Adam brought upon himself fell upon me and all mankind equally with himself, and it equally fell upon our Lord Jesus Christ

as upon any of the sons of Adam for "he was made a *curse* for us," and did actually all that Adam brought upon himself and his posterity to the very last punctilio (Genesis 3, 19; Psalm 22, 15). "And thou has brought me into the dust of death." Christ came into the world under sin, but Christ did not come into the world *sinful*. If He had not been as deeply involved in Adam's sin as any man, no man had ever been delivered from it nor had He been like his brethren, and then He could not have been a mediator, then all mankind had eternally perished. Yet had there been the least stain of guilt upon His soul there could not have been any redemption. The truth of the matter is, and which may be truly gathered from the Scriptures, that Adam was made lord of the visible creation—he sinned and thereby brought total ruin, destruction, and extirpation upon every existence or everything that had any kind of being in the universal creation. The second Adam stepped in or came into the place of the first even into all the sin and all the misery, and wrought absolute perfect deliverance for all things (Acts 3, 21). Therefore in the same sense that we came sinful into the world so did He, that is, under all the sufferings brought by that first sin. And in the same sense that He came spotless into the world so do we—that is : free from all intellectual pollution or enmity against God. All mankind came into the world under all the curse of Adam's transgression. All mankind came into the world as pure from intellectual pollution as Adam came out of the hands of his Maker. *Let the Word of God decide.*

Nothing can be found in the Word of God (if we can get out of the sound of the Devil's bell of men's traditions), that properly conveys the least idea of men bringing sinful natures into the world from Adam, or that any thing doth spring from his fault to cause us to be sinful, or that our personal transgressions did in anywise proceed from his fall or that there is or ever was any manner of connection between that sin and our actual sins. The doctrine of original sin or original corruption was invented by wicked men to excuse themselves and cast the odium upon God, and indeed it does completely answer their end, for it represents the God of perfect holiness in a light as perfectly abominable as ever the word of God represents the Devil. Let it be looked at in every light, whatever the constitution was, it was God that fixed it, and if we are made sinful without our consent it was God that made us so. If God laments over men, reproves, threatens, etc., for what they could not avoid, but His own hand had ordered, He must be the highest of dissemblers. If He punishes men eter-

nally for what was unavoidable, He must be the most execrable tyrant. Nothing but men's wilful rebellion is the cause of actual sins being universal. From what fountain was Adam's sin produced? As to the law it was the immutable will of God towards mankind, and it is absolute perfection (Romans 7, 12). "Wherefor the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just and good." (Matthew 5, 18). "Till earth and heaven pass away one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled. The strength of sin is the law."

CONCERNING THE LAW.

The holy righteous law of God is in every respect worthy of Him that gave it; perfectly adapted to the capacities of the creatures to whom it is given, and never did require of any man more than God had given to that same person power to perform. To Adam it was perfectly suited to his condition; to us it is perfectly suited to our condition. "For God will be clear when He judges." Therefore this law never could give strength to the being and nature of sin which it was given to restrain, but by pointing it out it causes its strength to appear. For by the law is the knowledge of sin, so that it is the convincing strength in the conscience and will be the strength thereof in the day of judgment. Where there is no law there is no transgression. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3, 4). As to the law of sin (Romans 8, 2) "For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

And the law in the members (Romans 7, 23) "But I see another law in my members warring against the law in my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members." It is plain they are not the same. The one was the dominion of sin which reigned over his heart and will in his carnal state but from which he was now made free by the spirit. The other was the dregs of sin, still remaining in his flesh, of which he still complained, though it did not bring his mind into captivity (verse 25). "So then with the mind I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin." It sometimes captivated him in some of his passions and actions, like a conquered enemy still lurking to do mischief. *I through the law am dead to the law.*

When persons have some slight conviction of outward gross sins and it may be some reformation, they commonly continue alive to the law expecting to recover themselves by a more diligent

attention to the precepts. But when the commandment in its searching power comes to their consciences convincing them of the perfect holiness of the law and the plague of their hearts, then sin revives (or shows itself in its dreadful forms and clear colours) and they die ; or all hope of salvation by their own righteousness dies away. They never more can expect acceptance with God through their obedience to the law. Whether they have life in Christ or not, the law kills them. The children of God will never be dead to the law as a rule of righteousness, but as a covenant. When a soul is killed merely by dint of the law without a view of the life that is in Christ it goes exceeding hard ; he struggles sore for his life, and is long in dying because he sees no other life to enter into. But when he beholds another life in Jesus he cheerfully resigns his former life and dies easy—that he may live unto God.

“ The law hath dominion over the man so long as he liveth ”
(Romans 7, 1).

A man being under any law can never be free from that law so long as he remains in the same capacity in which he was when the law was given. The divine law is perfectly adapted to the nature of men as they came perfectly immaculate into the world, with respect to their intellectual faculties. It is absolutely impossible for the eternal God to create a creature sinful or by any means to bring sin into them until that creature is endowed with faculties to receive it—that is knowledge and conscience.

ORIGINAL SIN.

A more wicked doctrine than that of original sin, neither a more foolish one, was ever invented. From the Apostle's first proposition, he reasons upon a woman being bound by the law to her husband while he lived, but loosed if he were dead. From thence he concludes though she may be called an adulteress if she married another during her husband's life, yet if her husband be dead she is at full liberty, as if she had never been married. This he applies to the law which we were under so long as we continued in the state of nature, but when we became dead to the law through the righteousness of Christ, the law becomes dead to us. We see the law fulfilled for us by the death of Christ, and enjoy its fulfilment in us by the spirit. The law is dead to us as a covenant, and has no power to condemn. The unmistakable law can never be dead in itself, but becomes dead to us through being perfectly fulfilled. Texts quoted (Isaiah 13, 21 ; Gal. 3, 13).

Adam was made the head and sovereign lord of the whole creation which he held by the tenure of obedience to his God, so that on him depended the continuance or the total extirpation of all created things. He sinned and brought destruction on himself and on every being under his dominion. But Christ taking the whole into His own hand makes an end of that sin and all its effects for ever. So that after the general conflagration whereby the curse shall be burnt out of the earth, and after the resurrection the mortality brought by Adam's sin shall be swallowed up by the immortality that is in Christ, no human creature shall feel the least vestigia of Adam's transgression in any part of the creation any more than if that offence had never existed. For the sin of Adam never had the least personal connection with our personal sins, nor has the punishment thereof the least resemblance to the wrath that shall fall upon the wicked in the last judgment. And as to the question respecting the sin of Adam which men have invented to call original sin this is a brat of the old breed which is very prolific. For when enmity committed incest with his sister guilt, the production was excuse. "The woman whom you gavest to be with me"—"the serpent beguiled me." Anything, anything at all, to palliate our own offences and cast the dirt upon God. But positive I am these arguments never were, nor ever will be used by a soul truly contrite before God. For what is this original sin. I want it described not from Popes, councils, school divines, celebrated authors, human traditions, and old adages, but from the express word of God, or else from the nature of things that we may come to a determination what it is. For no man can reason good sense any further than he reasons from premises certainly known. It is certain the bitter effects of Adam's sin we bring with us into the world and shall retain till Jesus comes in His glory to destroy the last enemy. But that we bring anything of the nature of that condemnation which the wicked shall suffer cannot be found in the Bible. As a God of Justice, it is impossible for Him to lay a punishment of a nature contrary to the nature of the offence and which was never threatened as a penalty on Adam's crime. The condemnation I did bring upon myself by my own sins, but that it should be laid upon me for Adam's sin is a thing impossible to God himself. Who told the bold asserter that man brings into the world such a corrupt nature from Adam as will prompt him to those things that will assuredly bring damnation?

Some persons are very dogmatical for pleading for original sin from Psalm 51, 5 ; but this is far from determining what they would urge. For the original word is *warm** me which some think as natural as conceive me, and then it only comes to the same as Psalm 58, 3, " the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they be born speaking lies," and Isaiah 48, 8, " Yea, thou heardest not, yea, thou knowest not ; yea, from that time that thine ear was not opened for I knew that thou wouldest deal very treacherously, and wast called a transgressor from the womb." But allowing the strict sense to be to conceive it is far from proving that he was conceived with a sinful propensity. It is certain his mother was a sinner. She was suffering from sin in her conception, and he was conceived under the curse for the first sin. And I make no doubt that nature is much depraved both as to the faculties of mind and body, but that man is conceived with a direct promptitude to sin against God is more than any man has a right to affirm. I apprehend all the saints must go through trials and temptations, and occasionally through corrections and chastisements, because the Lord sits as a refiner, and some kinds of dross will not be extracted without some corrosive ingredients as well as dint of fire and powerful blast. But He is perfect in wisdom and makes all work together for good. Salvation is the lower branch of the tree of life, and it is never complete in this mortal state. But we are still expecting to find it going on both in the purification of the inner man and the practical part in the conversation. Glorification is the higher branch and cannot come to its full bloom till the return of a new spring, yet it is begun in the believer and continues to increase shooting forth fresh verdure even among the thorns, and in the midst of gloomy tribulation and corruption (Isaiah 60, 7 ; Romans 8, 30). As to what David says Psalms 51, 5 ; 58, 3. In the former he seems to speak his own experience or what he could remember. For as the margin tells us the word rendered *conceive* in our translation is *warm* in the Hebrew, and therefore there is no more to be learned from it, but David's contrition for sin of which he was conscious ever since he had knowledge or ever since his mother nursed him. In the latter he speaks his own observation how the wicked learn to sin from their parents—that they begin to speak and act wickedly from the first opening in the world. But if the word *estranged* have any meaning according to its common acceptation it cannot convey an idea of their having a wicked nature while in the womb,

* NOTE.—See the Bible of 1660 where the word in the margin is *warm*.

for then the wickedness they afterwards discover would be a uniformity and no estrangement. From the womb means no more than from the first appearance that is manifest, that the beholders can observe. It is impossible for them actually to transgress the day they are born (Isaiah 48, 8). And the man must be a fool that could imagine that John the Baptist should be filled with the Holy Ghost from the first hour he was swaddled. Such things were never intended to be understood according to conjectures or by some chimerical existence or occult quality, but according to open manifestation. Laying aside a prepossessed fancy there does not appear in either of the above Psalms the least reason to conceive that David ever thought of opening any mystery or informing mankind of something they did not know concerning the sinfulness of nature, but reasoning upon that which comes within the notice of all rational men. But why should we make wonders and be struck at the depth of the arcanum when there is no secret in it? Did you ever find in yourself or observe in any other person or hear or read of any that more readily adhered to a temptation, or more easily drank the poison and more promptly rushed upon the violation of God's law than our first parents did? Pray whence came their original sin? These casuistical enquiries come from the same root. "*Ye shall be as gods knowing good and evil.*"

[NOTE.—I do not desire to strengthen the views of Johnson on this or any subject by quoting the opinions of another, however eminent, but the words of the late Rev. F. W. Robertson, of Brighton, in his notes on Psalm 51, are so pertinent and well expressed that I feel compelled to quote them: "True as the doctrine is that physical and moral qualities are transmissible, you do not find that doctrine here. It is not in excuse but in exaggeration of his fault that David speaks. He lays on himself the blame of a tainted nature, instead of that of a single fault: not a murder only, but of a murderous nature 'conceived in sin.' From his first moment until then, he saw sin—sin—sin: nothing but sin. Learn the individual character of sin; its personal origin and personal identity. There can be no transference of it. It is individual and incommunicable. My sin cannot be your sin, nor yours mine."—EDITOR].

Concerning the invented doctrine of original sin, and the cause of sinning and our misery being laid upon Adam, you say negative proof is not demonstration. You are very greatly mistaken, and perhaps you are not aware of what dangerous consequence

your mistake is. What? Is not a total silence in the word of the Lord respecting any subject whatever an absolute demonstration that God never intended us to believe such a subject? If we deny this we are left to ramble through all the wilds of the infernal Hades to find God in some dark cavern, enchanted hole, or infectious den. "God is light and in Him is no darkness at all." If ever we begin to grope after God in the dark, it is not the true God but a Devil we are pursuing. Are our vain fancies left to supply the defects of His word? (Deut. 4, 2; 12, 32; Rev. 22, 18, 19). Did the holy prophets deliver the word of God deceitfully (Jer. 26, 2). Was Christ unfaithful in His house? (John 15, 15). Did the Apostles conceal the truth of God? (Acts 20, 27). No assertions nor oaths can be a stronger demonstration that a thing is not the will of God to us than the silence of His word.

Nature and sin are quite different things, and as for those who fancy the similarity of the tempers of children to their parents is an argument in favour of original sin, they plainly discover that they argue from a principle of enmity against God, and that they neither regard scripture nor common sense, nor do they know what sin is. Is there no difference between sin and natural temper? But as it is undeniable these persons were never convinced of sin it may be to no purpose to argue with them. But if natural temper be sin and that it follows the immediate parents how is this an argument of its being from Adam any more than from any other of the progenitors? But they that know what sin is by a deep sense of the stain upon their consciences do not confound it with natural temper, nor does it appear to them so light a matter to play with it at this foolish rate. *The matter with them is who shall deliver me?*

As to man being made in the image of God, it is certain that he was made in the very nature that God chose to dwell in as His highest delight (Genesis 3, 15; Psalm 80, 17; Zech. 13, 7; John 1, 14; Romans 1, 3, 4; 1 Tim. 3, 16; Hebrews 2, 16, 17). But is it to be supposed that God made man in His image so as to be understood by man prior to the revelation of Christ, and that it is an image which mankind retains even in his fallen state (1 Cor. 11, 7; James 3, 9)? It is not only said that he *was* but that he *is* not considered as a new creature, but as a human creature. And in Genesis 1, 26, 27 it is expressed wherein this image should be, namely in His dominions, and hence rulers are called Gods because they are God's representatives. And this must include a capacity

of government as wisdom, etc. And this is not lost, though by sin it suffers a great infraction. Man was not possessed of spiritual holiness which he enjoys by the faith of Jesus. He was possessed of pure innocency and so was every creature (Genesis 1, 31). But there is a special glory couched in it as Genesis 1, 27 ; 5, 1, 2, respecting male and female. For Jehovah had his spouse then dwelling in his eternal bosom though not openly manifest. So Adam had his spouse contained in his nature though not openly seen by him, but afterwards presented to his delight.

As to natural tempers people often pretend to prove sin to be in children from their natural tempers which will appear at a few months old (some say one month). But this is idle talking and shows that those persons do not know what sin is. For at this rate they may charge brutes with sin. These things may proceed from the vivacity or dulness of their frame. Keeness of their sensations or some disease or something which may affect them, to us unknown. But sin is impossible where there is no knowledge of breaking a law. Where no law is there is no transgression. And as to persons of understanding, natural inclinations often grow to vicious habits by sinful indulgence. Whatever is purely natural is not sin. It is the irregular indiscreet unlawful gratification of those inclinations that is the fault. One man has a lively appetite to meats and drinks of taste (Genesis 27, 9). This is a blessing, and gives him pleasure in the good things of God while he uses them for health and not for intemperance. Another has delight in a woman ; let him take a wife in the fear of God and answer the benediction (Genesis 1, 28). While he restrains himself from unlawful gratification it is no sin. One delights in retirement. Can he improve it to good purpose it is well. Another delights in company. Can he choose company to whom he may be useful and they useful to him ; he is right so as a due regard be taken to avoid excess or neglect of duty, but seek the glory of God in all these things. A man has strong passions. If these be regulated by wisdom they may be very useful and be made subservient to the glory of God, but by sinful indulgence they become the reverse. All men have their different tempers, dispositions, and propensities. These are not sin. The sin is in allowing them to grow exorbitant, and get the mastery of their reason. It is no crime to have children and servants. The crime is for a man to suffer them to tyrannise and run him to ruin.

Man was not created corruptible nor mortal nor inclinable thereto, for then he had been certain to die whether he sinned or

not. He was created a pure being free from corruption and death till sin introduced corruption and corruption made death inevitable. But when Jesus comes He will take all His saints out of the old fractured nature into His own incorruptibility and into His own immortality, and corruption and death shall be swallowed up in Himself.

Forgiveness of sins is the taking away the cursed thing from our hearts.

Regeneration or being born again brings the believer to live by the faith of the Son of God. But without this life of faith the radicated stain of sin can never be purged away. The life of Jesus is of a nature so far superior to any life we had before that whether we had sinned, or we had not we could not enjoy Him without being new creatures. And since we sinned our state is so inconceivably wretched that nothing short of the special grace of life and truth can take away the pollution.

Christ redeemed all mankind from the effect of Adam's sin for that sin only affected our natural condition, it did not pollute our hearts and dwell in our intellectuals as our sin does, and as it was not in us—but upon our nature, a debt to be paid, not a plague to be healed.

You think you did not offend because your desires were sincere. It may be Job thought he was sincere and did not think he offended when he uttered what he knew not. But had it not been in your power to have laid aside those corrupt traditions of men that you might have received the ingrafted word of God? This was not what Adam put into you, but what you had imbibed from human tradition. You determined to exculpate yourself by laying your sin upon Adam.

Whatever weakness or defect we may have sustained through the transgression of Adam we never find that God charged it upon us as our sin. Nor do we find that He ever threatened or accused any person for any thing, but such as He had both knowledge and power to have avoided the evil (Deut. 11, 20, 7 ; John 4, 11 ; Romans 1, 21). Serious attention to the word of God would plainly show that the sin of Adam never extended only to time and to the visible creation. Whatever brings eternal misery proceeds from individuals independent of Adam.

Nature originally did not come from Adam but from God. How it comes to pass that no man preserves his original purity (See Eccles. 7, 29). "God made man upright, but they have

sought out many inventions." Adam was perfect. How came he to relinquish his perfection. Just in the same way as do all the children of men by seeking his own will and disregarding his Creator's.

The law given to Adam was suited to his station and the law given to us is suited to our station.

If you can depend on your own memory, I can tell you when you lost this power. It was after you did know what the law of God requires of you and you disregarded the will of God to gratify your own will.

EXPLANATION OF MARK 13, 32.

You request my thoughts on Mark 13, 32. "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, etc., neither did the Son." It is plain from Peter's confession John 21, 17, that the disciples did not suppose the Lord of Glory could be ignorant in anything. But this we may understand that Jesus always ascribes everything to his Father. And particularly whatever He revealed to His disciples as having received it from His Father (John 3, 32; 13, 26-38; 14, 10; 15, 15; 18, 8). Now it is plain that the knowledge that the precise day and hour of His coming was not given to the Son to reveal to His disciples (Acts 1, 7). But the Father calls Him the Son of God (Psalm 14, 5). I and My Father are one (John 10, 30). "This is the true God and eternal life" (1 John 5, 20). "Christ the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1, 24). Now it is impossible from the wisdom of God anything could be concealed. He who knows the Father must infallibly know all things (John 8, 55). Sometimes He takes the Divine character (John 14, 28), Sometimes the human "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death" (Matthew 26, 38).

The human nature simply considered must receive all knowledge from the Divine. Whenever He speaks of hearing, seeing, or receiving from the Father it is to be understood of the man only, for in His divine character it is impossible for Him to receive, learn, to be anointed or to increase. He is man in God and God in the man; and from the man Christ Jesus nothing is withheld, for he must enjoy all that dwells in Him even the fulness of the God-head bodily (John 5, 17-30).

SEVEN ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR A MINISTER.

1. They are called by grace ; the Son of God is revealed in them (Gal. 1, 15, 16), otherwise they cannot preach the truth because they know it not.

2. They infallibly know their union with Christ through the spirit of adoption (John 14, 20), for without that spirit they cannot preach that kingdom (Romans 14, 17), nor declare what they have seen and heard (1 John 1, 3).

3. They have been made partakers with Christ in trials and temptations (Matthew 4, 1 ; Mark 10, 39). For if they do not know the fellowship of His sufferings and they learn obedience, they can be no more than novices (1 Tim. 3, 6).

4. They are well instructed into the precious truths and mysteries of the Kingdom of God (Matthew 13, 11 ; Eph. 3, 3, 4, 5) ; otherwise they cannot be able ministers of the New Testament (2 Cor. 3, 5, 6).

5. They are blessed with the gift of utterance to make known those mysteries to others (Eph. 6, 19, 20), otherwise they cannot be useful to edification (1 Cor. 14, 16, 26).

6. They are filled with love to Christ, and to His people above all things whatsoever, and consequently are willing to deny themselves everything that is dear to them in this world for the sake of His kingdom (John 21, 15, 16, 17 ; 2 Cor. 12, 15), otherwise either worldly interest, worldly esteem, or other inducements will draw them away (at least) from the spirit and truth of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 16, 17, 18 ; 2 Tim. 4, 10).

7. They have courage invincible neither fearing to face man nor devils (Jer. 15, 20 ; Acts 4, 13), for otherwise they will be overcome and recede from the pure word of life (John 10, 12, 13 ; Acts 20, 24). He that hath these qualifications cannot be drawn away by the traditions of men (John 10, 5), and he that wants any of them cannot be a minister separated to the Gospel of God, for whomsoever the Son of God sends to his work does not go without his credentials (Mark 1, 17). He that cannot shew his credentials has no right to call himself an ambassador of Jesus (Jer. 23, 21). "I have not sent these prophets yet they ran. I have not spoken to them yet they prophesied."

I apprehend the lambs of God may suffer deeply through the attacks of the adversary, but I do not believe it is in the power of

the legions of hell to remove them from the rock—that is, not from the true faith of the Son of God (Matthew 24, 24 ; Rev. 13, 8, 14 ; 1 John 4, 6).

JESUS NOT A MONOPOLIZER.

Jesus is not a monopolizer of anything whatever. He hath not eaten His morsel alone. He shares all in common amongst His children and informs us that we need only ask and we shall receive (Psalms 81, 10 ; 78, 72).

LETTER TO A VERY SENSITIVE LADY;

Can dear Mrs. — accept a word of advice from a sincere heart, sympathising friend ?

Can dear Mrs. — bend her mind to study her own honour and comfort ?

Can dear Mrs. — guard herself against qualifying her adversaries and avoid giving herself a prey into their hands ? Then I think she may make herself tolerably happy though not so truly happy as I could wish her to be. Yet I think she may come to be much happier than she is.

Psalm 55, 21. When a person who has the command of temper intends to provoke to raise her spirit, to ruffle her mind with words as fine as silk, as soft as velvet, yet of a very cunning nature. This is plainly the design to throw her into a passion that she may express some unguarded words thereby to expose herself, that others may accuse her, and tell how violent she was, and with what bitterness she used him when he did not give her one harsh or disrespectful word. This is their sport and she cannot please them better or gratify them more than by going into a passion. This is a sweet morsel for them to feast upon, and to make her contemptible in all companies. Now cannot my dear friend see these things and set herself to disappoint them ? Let them never see her moved—smile it out—bite her lips—go directly out of the company or some way avoid giving them the pleasure (Psalm 39, 1). Answer him not. Nothing can be more vain than for her to attempt to argue, debate, or reason with them for they know how to put her in a passion, and then they have gained the victory and triumph. I confess that she may meet with some things so grating that she may think she cannot contain. But cannot a man refrain from running into the fire when he knows it will answer no other end but to burn himself ? or can he not refrain from

putting his hand in a lion's mouth when he sees the jaws open on purpose to tear him? There are three things whereby a person may have his mind fortified to bear insults :

1. Stability of natural disposition.
2. Philosophy, or sound reasoning.
3. The fear of the Lord.

As to the first I can feelingly sympathize with my dear friend. I know her weakness. I have found the same weakness to my distress when I have been treated as she now is. As to the second, sound reasoning will tell her that when an adversary is waiting for an advantage against us, our wisdom is by all means to disappoint him. And let all their mockery pass without taking any notice rather than put it in his power to load us with greater reproach. As to the third our cause is known to the Lord. If we pour out our hearts before Him, confess our own sin and infirmity, and cry to Him for strength we may hope for His presence with us to make our shoes iron and brass, and according to our days that our strength may be. May the God of Glory bless.

CONFUSION OF VOICES AMONG TEACHERS.

In one letter (to Mr. S. Fisher), Johnson speaks of the confusion of voices and sentiments amongst the various teachers and sects, their wild conjectures, misunderstandings, and mistakes, especially with regard to God Himself.

One says He decreed sin to be that He might shew what He could do in saving souls from it. Another says had it not been for sin, Christ had never come. Another says Christ's righteousness is perfect, and that He obeyed the law in our stead and yet, we are not justified without the shedding of His blood also. One says God chose His people in their miserable state as if they had been unchosen until then. Another says He chose them in the pure mass, as if the mass must have been formed before He could determine what to do in it. Another says Election is like a beautiful woman who cannot exist without her natural pregnancy, so wherever it is, reprobation is in its womb. One says if a man's conscience be so awakened as to be sensible of his sin it is a proof of spiritual life. Another says a man is regenerated without the word. Another tells regeneration is wrought in an instant, then it cannot be by the illumination of the word of truth understood and digested in the soul, or it cannot be faith (which is impossible in the nature of things) to be wrought without so much time as the word to be

understood and its truth made undeniably manifest. And others pretend that a person may have a spiritual life and not know it. Others fancy it comes by some visible sign, sound, voice, vision, or sudden alarm, and others look for some estatic raptures, concussions of mind, violent agitations, or exorbitant flames of passion, etc., etc. Thus they represent themselves as having no deliberate knowledge of the word of God, and as having sacrificed natural reason to some groundless extravagantly wild conjectures. They represent the Being they worship as some whimsical, capricious Deity.

SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE.

The Scripture is a perfect system of divine light, grace, and truth. It consists of one pure stream of life and blessing. There is not a word in the Bible that contains the least discouragement to a sinner seeking salvation in Christ. There is not a word in the Bible that has a direct tendency or that naturally can raise any horror or uncomfortable gloom in a believer's mind in any manner of thing.

AS TO REGENERATION.

You say you cannot gather up my ideas of regeneration. I think it would not be lost time to spend a deliberate hour in examining how you came to gather up the ideas you have of regeneration. It is an allusion to, or the word is taken from, generation as generation in a substantial manifest work bringing that which had no separate existence to be a living child, breathing in open air and acting among mankind in the world.

In a complete sense nothing less than this is generation, which never was performed in a moment. Regeneration is nothing less than the bringing of a soul out of the kingdom of Satan into the Kingdom of God, or passing from death into life—which is never effected in a moment.

There is no life but in the Son of God ; there is no living by Him but through faith ; there is no hearing but by the word of God ; there is no receiving the word of God but by the understanding, and the understanding has not received it until it can form just and distinct ideas of Christ and His excellency, so as to trust and love Him with all the heart and soul and be perfectly willing to part with every created excellency for His sake as well as to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. A soul cannot possibly be born of God until he is (indeed and in truth) dead to every other thing, and Christ is become his all in all. But the formation of

mankind is such that it does not admit of such understanding in a minute. It is all vain amusement. I know that this ridiculous whim of instantaneous regeneration did not come into the world by accidental mistake, but is a contrivance of the infernal council.

AS TO A CHURCH.

A people orderly formed into a Church supposes a number sufficient to carry on the worship of God, to keep rank and order, to instruct, admonish, and judge of matters among themselves, so as to hold together as a body and also that the residence of these people is such as admits of them assembling together on a Lord's Day. That they are by one spirit united to the Lord, and by the same spirit united one to another in Christ (1 Cor. 12, 13).

Being of one faith and judgment in worship, of one heart in loving one another and one soul in pursuing the Glory of Christ. And in the union of Spirit, they keep close to the pure doctrine, forms, laws, orders, and ordinances of the House of God. They cease to be a real Church of Christ when all the lively stones or spiritual believers are taken away or reduced to so few that they stand only as cyphers among a superior number of formal professors, while the affairs of the Church are governed by carnal principles after the will of men.

It ceases to have the form of a Church of Christ when the doctrine and order of the Gospel are no longer attended and they cease to be a Church of any kind when the members either cease to be or are so scattered that all union and order are discontinued.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION.

No man can know his justification but by his sanctification, because sanctification includes every communication, operation, or spiritual blessing that ever any soul enjoys from God, for as no man can know any part of divine truth only so far as his understanding is sanctified nor believe in God any further than he is sanctified by holy faith. And men are active in their sanctification that is in the eternal or practical part of it. When the soul is sanctified through the truth of God so that he dwells in the holiness of God he will be active in glorying God.

I know it is impossible for any man to be a follower of Christ, and not be hated of the world, especially of the religious world.

HUMAN TRADITION.

If it be possible shake yourselves from the dust of human tradition (Isaiah 52, 2 ; 1 Peter 1, 18, 19), from which it is impossible to be free so long as you pay any deference to the wisdom or authority of any man or men upon earth, I mean the traditions of Baptists and Calvinists as well as Papists and Arminians.

AS TO FORBIDDEN FELLOWSHIP.

What fellowship can I have with persons of these principles ? A God who is not love. A God by whose decree sin is made unavoidable and who cannot execute the purposes of His grace without it. A Christ who is not properly set up from everlasting, or had not the pre-eminence in the Father's Council, but found out or contrived to assist upon an emergent necessity occasioned by the intervention of sin. A Christ who only bestows some kind of life upon His people, but is not Himself their life. A spirit that speaks of himself or operates in the soul in a separate capacity without any manifestation of the Father or the Son or the word of His grace. A spirit that walks in darkness or performs a work of grace in the soul which the soul neither knows how nor when it was wrought, nor what it is or whether it is or not a word of God which is something else beside God and therefore not divine. A new creature which is not the man but some certain principle created in him or something produced in regeneration that is neither human nor divine. A new birth which is neither by communication of the immortal seed or fulness of Christ nor being brought forth into the light and truth of Christ, but by mere dint of operation, whereby a turn is given to the current of nature, or a different bias or inclination formed in or impressed upon the mind. Spiritual life properly subsisting in the man not by immediate communication or vital union with Christ or Christ dwelling in him and he in Christ as vine and branches. Faith which is not God through Christ by the power of His Spirit in the truth of His word dwelling in the soul, but the creature's own act. Hope which looks only for such an enjoyment as Adam had before his fall. But according to some it must be more, for Adam's felicity was prior to sin but they say Grace and Glory could not have been the same things they are had it not been for the intervention of sin.

PREACHING THE WHOLE GOSPEL.

Without very impartial attention to the whole Gospel, and every part of the counsel of God we shall get some particular

branches of His word as our favourites and shall dwell on them while we wrong the children of other things that are equally necessary. We may have such desire for calling or making impression on the hearts of sinners as to dwell upon those points of mercy, redemption, pardon, etc., to the neglect of the promise of the Holy Ghost, Christ's priesthood, our union with him, etc., or we may be pursuing the highest manifestations of Gospel grace so as to overlook the proclamation to sinners, and the milk for babes and so not dispense a portion in due season. Or we may preach the pure gospel of Christ in the main and forget to make an observation of the case, the taste, the want or capacity of our particular flock.

AN ITCH FOR NUMBERS.

In a letter from Johnson to Fisher, he says: "There is one thing I would have you to beware of as you would of the Devil himself—it is a gin in which he has caught many; and none escape that are overtaken by it. I mean an itch of fondness for numbers, either hearers or members."

DUTY OF MEMBERS TO MINISTERS.

Do you understand the proper duty of members to ministers? Few as I observe know how to regard them in the station in which God has placed them, but either idolize their persons or else disregard their office as stewards of the House of God.

LOVE OF CHRISTIANS TO ONE ANOTHER.

Do you understand the love of Christians to one another? It is a great thing to love with a pure heart fervently—that our love be grounded alone on the love of Christ, neither excited by dint of passion nor quenched by caprice but regularly maintained in truth. Do you understand the order, discipline, or fellowship of Saints? It is calculated in a perfect line without any ceremony or superstition. For maintaining purity of doctrine and worship; purity, stability, and comfort in our own souls, unity of spirit one with another and an upright, unblemished conversation among men. But as far as I observe most professors know very little about it, nor can it be impressed upon them to apply their minds to understand this part of the word.

Perhaps you will say I had more need to give you some instruction in these things—no, my friends—one line by way of enquiry may be of more real use to you than ten sheets by way of instruction. (John 5, 39; Acts 17, 11).

ACTING FAITH.

Concerning acting faith you say you are puzzled by the many passages of Scripture which call upon the Saints to believe. You might have added, and sinners too. If by faith we understand to be perfectly persuaded of the truth of a thing, every rational man upon earth knows it depends on the authority of the evidence and not on his will or act. He can no more do it than he can fly, but as the evidence preponderates.

I despise contentions about words only, when those words convey false ideas and tend to pervert the mind by raising gross conceptions of God and darkening the light of the glorious gospel. The word faith has many acceptations in the word of God, but the matter in debate is whether the faith whereby we are justified is the gift of God or the work of the creature. If it is a thing required of man ; if it is a duty ; if it is an act ; then it is the performance of the creature and not the gift of God. You know the blessings are frequently annexed to believing (John **3**, 15 ; 16 ; **5**, 24 ; **6**, 40 ; Numbers **10**, 9). Where there is nothing of the nature of commands but declarations of faith and descriptive characters of them that enjoy the blessings or more properly of the way in which the Lord bestows the blessings, viz. : through faith. Where saints are called upon to believe it is plain the intent cannot be for unbelievers to make themselves believers (John **14**, 1 ; 1 John **3**, 23). The design is to bend the mind, incline the ear, to give attention to His word with diligence in a practical way that we may be more clearly instructed and more clearly united and our faith increased so as we may in all things grow up unto Christ. This is the whole and the alone thing intended in all the laws, ordinances, worship, and order in the house of God (1 Thess. **3**, 10 ; 2 Thess. **1**, 11). Yet this in strict propriety of speech does not intend believing to be their act but to make special application to the convincing testimony of God which is sufficient to cause them to believe (Acts **20**, 32). As Peter is said to warm himself (John **18**, 18). It was no other than because he could not warm himself he made application to the fire to warm him. Those that have faith already only want it increased and perfected (1 John **5**, 13), and where unbelievers are commanded to believe the thing commanded it is their duty, their act in their power, and for their disobedience they shall be condemned (Mark **1**, 15 ; John **4**, 21).

But what is their duty ? To attend to the word of God where the record stands in such clear demonstration that it is impossible

for any natural man to pay due attention to it, but what it will convince him of the truth of the report though it is only the power of the Spirit that can make that truth effectual in his soul (2 Cor. 3, 3 ; 1 Thess. 1, 5). It is this effectual believing that men confound with the work of the creature and to teach persons to depend on their own freewill which gave rise to the debate. For where the true distinction between the sovereign grace of God, and the acts of men is not duly attended to there can be nothing but confusion, the glory of the everlasting gospel cannot possibly appear. As to what Paul said (Acts 16, 31), it does not appear to be properly a command but a comforting instruction and as salvation is connected with believing it must include the special operation of God (Col. 2, 12).

As to the three things (1 Cor. 13, 13), God is love. Therefore love is the life and substance of all. Faith and hope are nothing else but love manifested in peculiar modes which modes will cease when we come to the full enjoyment in the immediate presence of the Lord. But the thing believed and hoped for will remain. We can only believe what we do not see ; we can only hope for what we do not enjoy (Hebrews 11, 1). They are only mediums through which the love is now conveyed which mediums must of necessity cease when we come into immediate possession. What we enjoy by faith and hope is nothing less than God Himself, and there is neither faith nor hope but what is Himself communicated by those streams.

If we receive the very truth upon the credit of the most respectable body of men, we do not, in truth, receive it from God, and are liable to have it taken away by men of greater repute or greater cunning.

GOD IN UNITY AND THEREON.

As to what you desire my sentiments upon, I know no God but one. Nor do I learn from the divine record any such thing as a plurality of persons in the divine essence. Without unity there could be no God. Without unity no man could enjoy God. For without a perfect infinite ocean (the Father) there could be no source of life (1 John 1, 2). Without a perfect fountain or opening of the gates of the eternal depths of love there could be no light or manifestation of the divine grace (John 1, 18). Without a powerful vital stream of communication (the Holy Spirit) there could be no enjoyment (John 16, 14, 15 ; 1 Cor. 2, 12). But shall we call these three Gods or one God in three parcels, or the true God

in perfect unity? The eternal Jehovah in his own abstract essence is the Father (Exodus **3**, 14 ; 1 Kings **8**, 27). The self-same divine essence manifest in our nature is the Son (1 Tim. **3**, 16 ; 1 John **5**, 20 ; Col. **2**, 9). The self-same God of all grace in His special effectual vital communications of light, truth, and consolation is the Holy Ghost (1 Cor. **3**, 16 ; 2 Cor. **6**, 16 ; Eph. **2**, 22). We find nothing of distinct personality in the essence of God, but God distinctly revealing Himself the riches of His grace and glory, so as His children may clearly apprehend His immense fulness, the perfect channel in which it flows, and the special power by which His chosen are united to Himself, and that they may be at no loss respecting the union or fellowship of the mystery once hid in God but now revealed. God is immutable. Therefore whatever proceeds from Him in time must exist in the divine bosom from eternity. (Heb. **4**, 3). He calls things that are not as though they were because they are irreversible in His counsel. In this sense and no other Christ was set up from everlasting (Prov. **8**, 30, 31). He had the same existence in God as the earth and the sons of man had. I mean the human nature. In this sense we may allow He was the Son of God and was begotten (though the Scripture does not mention it in particular), was slain and glorified, and names written in His book (Rev. **13**, 8 ; John **17**, 5 ; Psalm **139**, 16). All that appears now or shall appear for ever is only the manifestation of what was from eternity (2 Tim. **1**, 9, 10).

“ All the blessing which the saints are made partakers of, have their foundations alone in Jehovah, and spring from the good pleasure of His will.” (Words used by correspondent approved by Johnson). I conceive of the Father as bearing a proper personal character as being the absolute and divine essence. Father of all things. I conceive of the Son as bearing a proper personal character as being the wisdom, power, truth, life, and fulness of the Godhead manifestly revealing Himself in our nature. I conceive of the Holy Ghost as bearing a proper personal character as He is the Spirit, truth, life, power, and fulness of God dwelling in His saints. There is a very clear distinction in the peculiar relations which the fountain of perfection and blessedness bears to His Church, and in the glorious manifestations He makes, and the vital communications by which His elect are blessed, and which without the three would be impossible. But He never tells us of any distinction in His own essence nor does He tell us of any acts or deeds made or done before time, only as everything brought forth in time was perfect in the omniscient mind.

All the fulness and glory certainly did exist in the eternal good pleasure, for had it not been in the divine will, counsel, or purpose, it could not have proceeded from a nonentity. The word is plain that God took our nature and in that capacity sustains the character of the Son of God, Immanuel, but we never learn anything of a Son till He proceeded from the Father in our nature, nor of the Spirit's proceeding till there were beings created to proceed unto ; or in the creation thereof. These things are only the invention of men who did not receive the Kingdom of God as little children, but by worldly wisdom sought to find out God.

Every man possesses a trinity in himself. That is a mind secret in himself—a faculty of expressing that mind—a power of action to execute his own designs. So a man may bear a variety of characters : prophet, priest, king, etc., yet the same person. There are three that bear record. These three are one in himself. To these three I doubt not God had regard in creation though they were not manifested as now (Romans 4, 17). Yet they were all distinctly expressed (Gen. 1, 12). Without the three, God never did anything, nor can do anything, nor exist without that perfection in Himself by which He answers the three relations or triune perfection. What was the original constitution of man's nature ? Man became a living soul. Was he immortal so that he could not die ? No ! (Gen. 2 17). Free from death. Not incapable of death. Had he an immortal soul in a mortal body ? No distinction in the threatening or the sentence. And in the formation and vivication man became a living soul. What was his loss by sin ? In departing from God he cast away the rectitude of his nature and therefore was condemned to lose his being because it was no longer good. Thus he absolutely lost all that he was possessed of or all that was possible for him to lose. And forasmuch as he could not convey to his posterity what himself did no longer possess, all his descendants lost in him whatsoever he lost himself. But respecting personal sins the case is otherwise, for through the resurrection of Christ there is a restoration of all human nature to a state that cannot be extirpated so that after the resurrection (when the last judgment shall be and which state was secured prior to our personal offences) (Gen. 3, 15). there can be no loss of being, yet the sinner loses all that is possible to be lost, viz. : the enjoyment of God, exclusive of which no creature can enjoy felicity (2 Thess. 1, 9). They are distinguished by the first and second death. The sin of Adam is given as the sole cause of the former (1 Cor. 15, 22), but never mentioned respecting the latter (2 Cor. 5, 10).

What restitution is to be expected by the fall? If every individual existence in the universal creation that suffered any kind of loss by Adam's sin be not perfectly restored from all the effects thereof as if it had never been so as in the new heavens and new earth to enjoy all the perfection they ever did in their primitive state the serpent's head is not perfectly bruised, and if there had been any restitution any other way than by Christ He had not been the alone deliverer not could He have been the second Adam if He had left the hyssop on the wall or anything imperfect which the first ruined (Psalm 8, 6, 7, 8; Hebrews 2, 8, 9; Isaiah 11, 6, 7, 8, 9; Acts 3, 21; Romans 8, 19, 23; Eph. 1, 10; 2 Peter 3, 13; Rev. 5, 13).

The new heavens and new earth will remain eternal—not for the saints (John 14, 1, 2), nor for the wicked (Rev. 20, 15), yet to be inhabited for ever (Isaiah 45, 18; 66, 22).

Be not frightened at these things because you have not heard them from many persons nor had them made orthodox in schools. Mind the Bible.

ROMANS 5, 12.

As to Romans 5, 12, etc., the Apostle is principally speaking of the universal redemption from the universal sin, but with this view—that the free gift in Christ has much more abounded even to our manifold personal offences and in this verse (12th) the judgment is universal and the justification is universal. If all mankind are not perfectly justified from Adam's guilt, the resurrection would be a very unrighteous thing. But as this verse compares the extent so the 19th compares the way the things came and includes both universal and peculiar redemption. I know the common run is that Adam was so fixed as our representative that we should take his chance, not in the channel of natural consequence, but arbitrary appointment that his lot should be ours. But this notion has neither scripture nor commonsense in its favour.

HOLINESS.

It is long since I heard from you, and I love to keep acquaintance with any that love the Lord. I should be glad to know how you go on, and if you see an equal glory in the Holy One as you see purity in His works. As you have a clear view of His righteousness, that is His negative perfection or freedom from evil, whether you have as clear a view of His positive perfection, His

holiness, and riches of the fulness of His boundless grace dwelling in His beloved Son and communicated by the spirit of truth in the special word of life.

AS TO MAN'S WILL.

I observe your enquiries, and as to the freedom of man's will as fallen it is to be observed that so far as sin prevails we are alienated from God and sunk into a self-dependence, self-will, self-direction, self-dominion, self-sufficiency and have contracted a natural habit or propensity to be, to act, to live to ourselves and to maintain a self-interest and self-felicity abstracted from, and independent from God as all rebels do who revolt from their lawful sovereign. And albeit that this is the quintessence of folly yet there is a strong bias to pursue the way that we have chosen so that the will is not free so long as we remain in this bondage (Prov. 5, 22 ; Jer. 13, 23 ; 2 Peter 2, 14, 19). It is impossible that he should be free to do the will of one Prince who has sold himself unto subjection to another, who is an irreconcilable enemy (Romans 6, 16, 20). But if the question respects actions—whether the man is possessed of freedom of will (or rather power) to do those things which he is persuaded are good, and which his heart approves I would say, how readest thou ? Is there anything in the word of God that asserts, suggests, or implies any restraint from God upon the will ? It is true God may give a contrary direction (1 Tim. 6, 18, 19), or by His providence He may prevent or make a thing impracticable (2 Chron. 20, 37).

But the matter is, whether God fixes an evil disposition in the man, or by any secret influence stagnates his mind that he cannot will a good thing ? or supposing him to will what is good. Whether there be some potent stimulation in the members compelling them to refuse obedience to the will or to act in opposition thereto. Does not the word of truth ascribe the good or evil of every action to the doer thereof according to the good or evil principle by which he is actuated and if he does evil from an evil principle ? Say is it from God. It is true the Apostle acknowledges impotency (Romans 7, 18 ; Gal. 5, 17), but whence did it arise ? He ascribes it only to the remains of sin or body of death not yet extinguished by which the affections were surprised or betrayed and through impetuosity of the passions the will was at certain periods diverted from its true station or natural centre. Again I would ask every rational man : How feelest thou ? Does not every man's conscience tell him that he himself is arbiter of his own actions ? And as for the person who says when he falls into sin he is as much concerned

as though he had the entire liberty or freedom of will. I must first ask him what is the real spring of his concern? A man may be grieved for his own actions on many considerations, as the damage done to his health, substance, character, friends, etc., but I take the meaning to be—because it is sin against God and offensive to His holiness. If so, it is because he knows he had the entire liberty or freedom of will. And I dare tell him his own conscience knows that he does not believe that his freedom of will (in those mistakes) was only a subservient one bounded by the secret all-powerful hand of God. For it is absolutely impossible for any intelligent being in the creation of God to be sincerely grieved purely because he has offended God, so long as he is persuaded either that what he did was unavoidable or that his will was directed therein by the will of God. If any man is grieved that the will of God is fulfilled (simply so considered) it is because his will is not subject to the will of God. But if it should be said that God who decreed sin decreed also that the doer of the sin should be grieved for it, this represents him as the God of apes and not of natural beings.

HEAVEN.

Heaven has a variety of significations, but in a gospel sense it is either the gospel of the glory of God coming down to our low capacity from the Father of light through the Son of His love by the spirit of His grace with its blessed effects in His Church, or it is the infinite perfection of that excellent glory from whence that blessedness proceeds—where Immanuel and His bride eternally dwelt in the bosom of eternal delight (Prov. 8, 30; John 17, 23, 24). Being real in the essential love of the unchanging “I am,” before there was any created existence (Psalm 139, 16; Romans 4, 17). From whence the being of the Holy One of God proceeded forth (John 8, 42), with all the fulness that dwells in Him (John 1, 14; Col. 1, 19); and which residence it is impossible for Him to leave so long as He is of God (John 1, 18; 6, 46). Yet there must be an ascension of the human soul or created powers of His mind into the depth of the father’s bosom as there was a personal ascension into the perfection of His glory after the resurrection. Though he was always in the Father in His love and purpose, He was not actually in the Father nor the Father in Him prior to His created existence. How idly do some tell us He left His Father’s bosom. If a branch shooting forth leaves the tree from whence it proceeds it will die (John 6, 57).

BODY AND SOUL.

I have never thought it possible (in the nature of the human constitution) for the soul to exist without the body or that the soul should have any sensation or receive intelligence through the corporeal organs so long as the body was dead. But since the Son of God who is the resurrection and the life is become Lord of dead and living, I am perfectly assured from the word of truth, that in Christ the soul has an existence absent from the body after death and in that state before the resurrection of the body the soul is in a capacity of cogitation and enjoyment or in consolation. (Luke **23**, 43, 46 ; 2 Cor. **5**, 8 ; Thess. **1**, 23 ; Isaiah **57**, 2 ; Hebrews **12**, 23 ; Rev. **14**, 11).

NATURAL MAN AND THE GOSPEL.

As to the natural man learning the theory of the gospel as a science. Did not Simon the Sorcerer believe—that is with a dogmatical faith? Yet he could make such an artful confession that Philip was imposed on and baptized him. For in the truth and power the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God—neither can he know them.

There be many that know a great deal about the Son of Man, His works, words, doctrines, and modes of worship that never received the things of the Spirit. But herein lies the mistake ; they do not distinguish between the faith of devils and the faith of God's elect (James **2**, 19 ; 2 Peter **1**, 2). The natural man is every man that breathes upon earth while he is not made spiritually alive unto God by the special power of the gospel whatever sort of man he be, civilized or savage, vicious, or the reverse, just or unjust, wise or foolish, the most vile or the most excellent (Isaiah **40**, 6 ; John **3**, 3). The highest attainment of man differs as much from the lowest breath of the spirit of God as earth from heaven, as life from death, as light from darkness.

BELIEVERS AND UNBELIEVERS.

I know that almost all professors make nothing of regeneration, but a restoration of the old nature from the depravity of sin. But purification from sin is only the negative or primitive part of sanctification. To be translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son is the positive or essential part thereof. Man in his primitive perfection bore no relation at all to the Kingdom of Christ and of God (1 Cor. **15**, 45, 50.)

SINFUL ACTIONS.

We must distinguish between the sinful actions and the principle which produced those actions. A number of persons are indicted for murder, but upon trial it proves one killed of malice prepense ; one killed that he might rob ; one killed in sudden passion ; one killed through indiscretion intending only to correct ; one killed in unguarded jesting ; one killed carelessly ; and one killed innocently as not being able to avoid it. Each one had done the fact ; but the law will distinguish the nature of the crime according as the design appears to be. So the same sinful actions may be more or less heinous in the sight of God as circumstances may appear (Luke **12**, 47, 48). Abner killing Asahel was not so criminal as Joab killing Abner (2 Samuel **2**, 22, 23 ; **3**, 26, 27). Now in some sense it may be said the sins of believers cannot possibly be so heinous as some sins of unbelievers because it is impossible that they should sin from the same principle (John **15**, 24 ; 1 John **3**, 9). But I take the case to be this—a believer and an unbeliever both breaking the law of God through equal disregard or indifference to that law, then certainly the believer's offence is greater because he knew more, confessed more, and enjoyed more, and as he was under greater obligations his sin was more aggravated and consequently more deserving of punishment (Amos **3**, **2**). God knows the heart and tries the reins and perfectly judges where the quintessence of sin lies. But the condition of believers and unbelievers is so different that it is impossible for us to put their sins upon a balance. But allowing the sins to be equal in the sight of God they must be equally displeasing to his holiness and of consequence must (in their own nature) be equally exposed to the wrath of God. But it must be observed that if the believer was still liable to be subjected to divine vengeance he would only be in the same condition he was when in unbelief, which he is not (1 John **2**, 1). Every believer knows that Christ has borne the wrath of God for his sins upon the tree, and consequently that it is impossible that that wrath should return upon him which has been extinguished by the blood of his surety. None can be a believer that knows not this. No believer is exposed to wrath.

AS TO THE GLORY OF THE CHURCH.

I am well assured it is as great as ever it was, for the glory of Christ can never abate (Isaiah **9**, 7). Notwithstanding His Church is in the wilderness, and is so obscured that one saint scarcely knows where to find another. They are only to be known by

receiving the words of God in its pure simplicity (1 John 4, 6). The fewness of the number makes the world strangers to them so that they do not believe that there is anything in the world as the real Christian is.

UNION WITH CHRIST.

No person knows his own union with the Son of God but in that with his whole soul he receives or believes the word of His truth. God has given no other criterion (1 John 4, 6). And he that hath this cannot possibly remain in uncertainty whether he is of God or not (1 John 4, 15). He that hath His word hath Himself. The word was God. There is not a living man under heaven who stands in doubt whether he belongs to Christ, or not, but that could (if he would be honest to himself) know certainly that he is or is not of the faith. And there is no other criterion whereby to judge of others but this alone. In regard to a person's self, his knowledge is absolutely infallible for it is self-evident in his own soul (John 6, 56 ; 2 Cor. 4, 6 ; Gal. 2, 20 ; 1 John 5, 10). But in regard to others we can only tell by the manifestation that appears, an open confession and walking consistently thereto. (Matt. 10, 32 ; Romans 10, 9, 10, 11, 14, 21, 23 ; 1 John 2, 6). But the characteristic you mention if genuine is only spoken of many fruits. And the outward performance may proceed from carnal principles, and often is the fruit of pride, hypocrisy and self-righteousness (Matt. 6, 2 ; 2 Cor. 13, 3).

It is impossible that any believer should be tormented with painful fear.

CHRIST: INTERCESSOR AND ADVOCATE.

Christ redeemed sinners, but none can know Him as an advocate but believers, nor can know Him as an intercessor till they are certain of an interest in Him as an advocate, nor can any soul wait for the promise of the Father till he knows Christ as an intercessor. Not in a gross way begging and pleading, etc., but one perfect union of will in the Son and the Father (John 17, 34).

NO MIRACLES SINCE APOSTOLIC DAYS.

God has never done anything in a miraculous way since the days of the Apostles, nor ever will again to the end of the world.

ANTICHRIST.

You ask me concerning the extirpation of Antichrist. The question is who is Antichrist, or false Christ, or takes the name of Christ, being a counterfeit ? It is a piece of the master politics

of Hell to direct all our expositors to fix that title upon the Pope and his conclave, that by raising a dust in that part of the camp the main body of the army may pass away undiscovered. Antichrist never did reign more despotic among Papists since he had an existence than he does among Baptists at this day. But as to his destruction, the very nature of the thing would tell us if we had any eyes (if scripture had been silent) that nothing can touch upon it but Jesus Christ in the power of His gospel effectually going forth (2 Thess. 2, 8). Neither is it possible that stick or stone should be lifted up against him by any other hand, or any execution done upon him in any other way but by the word of truth destroying human tradition, and the spirit of truth destroying the spirit of enthusiasm (Isaiah 2, 18 ; Zeph. 2, 11).

AS TO INSTANTANEOUS CONVERSION.

I know a person may be converted in an instant without the word—for by the discharge of a battery of cannon or a tremendous peal of thunder, a hectoring bully may be converted into a coward. This is not regeneration.

The most necessary and weighty matter that lies on the sons of man is to explode all human traditions and attend to the word of God. It is by that word alone that all spiritual blessings are communicated. For notwithstanding it is by the special power of the spirit of Christ we have our hearts opened to receive (not the theory) but the truth of that word—the spirit never speaks of Himself, but brings the word to our souls in the vital influence and sanctifying operation so that whatever spiritual impressions the believer at any time feels he always finds them from the illumination of the word ; for believers have no connection with enthusiasts, neither with mere spiritualists.

TWO MISTAKES BY PROFESSORS.

There are two grand mistakes which professors fall into for want of the guidance of the Spirit of God. One thing is before they know anything as they ought to know, they will be entangling their minds about the most mysterious parts instead of attending to those things which immediately concern their present condition, and so they are lost in speculative amusements and empty fancies. The other thing is their never pressing forward to come to the knowledge of the deep things of God, but looking upon everything that requires attention as unworthy their regard.

THE LORD IN THE MIDST OF HIS SAINTS.

The Lord dwells in the midst of His saints and they that are led by Him are certain to inherit substance because He will fill their treasures. Nothing can be greater than for Him to be our God and we to be His people. In this relation are insured to us all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. There is nothing too great for us to hope to arrive at ; nothing too high to ask of God ; no mystery too deep to search into ; nor is there any blessing too rich to wait for ; nor any address too bold for the heirs of God to approach their Father which is in heaven seeing they are absolutely one with the Son of God—Who is absolutely one with the Father of lights. There is nothing in God nor in the creation of God but what is absolutely their own. But yet we must remember we are minors under age and though all things are our right and property all things are not put into our hands. No ! We are not yet qualified. All things are put into the hands of our great guardian—the only begotten of the Father, and He hands them forth to us as He sees us prepared for them, and we are kept dependent on Him to prepare and replenish us with the blessings. But to do His will, to enjoy His love is impossible further than we know Him. Nor is it possible to know the Father but in the Son, whom if we know it is by His word of truth which through the word of His spirit dwells richly in us and effectually operates to unite our souls to the Son in the Father and to the Father in the Son, and to form our souls into the very image of Christ through the spirit (Eph. 4, 13).

BOLDNESS IN PRAYER.

As to the expressions (which I used in prayer) I freely allow you to think them too bold and I am convinced they were too bold to have been used in your hearing ; and had I known in what light you would have viewed them you should not have heard them. I humbly hope the time may come when such expressions may not be too bold to use before God, but then you may remember that they may be too bold to use before persons who cannot comprehend them. I am aware that they were expressions such as you were not accustomed to hear, and this gave a start to your imagination, and formed in your mind a crude conception and that gross idea had made so deep an impression it could never be removed or your mind could never attain freedom to view them in the true light, which perhaps you never may until you find boldness before the Lord to use arguments of equal import. And this it may be you

may not find until you come into the trials and temptations whereby you may be put to your shifts to try every method and every argument, examine every article of the believer's charter, and search the nature and ground of every promise and try the right of every relation and matter, use of every card, to hold the Holy One by His girdle. I do not remember the same words used by Christ or His Apostles, nor often that the very syllables used by one saint are expressed by another. Nor do I remember prayer called a demand. No! The term God uses is command (Isaiah 45, 11), and this authority the Son of God takes in addressing His Father (John, 17, 24). The Saints are encouraged to plead (Isaiah 1, 18; 43, 26; 62, 6, 7), and this license they take (Gen. 32, 9, 12, 26; 2 Samuel 7, 25; Job 23, 3, 4; Jer. 12, 2). My soul doth bless and magnify the Lord for giving me such boldness before His throne (Heb. 4, 16; 10, 19, 20, 23), while I neither suspect a backwardness nor disinclination in our heavenly Father to bestow every blessing that I can ask. Yes! He will be asked, sought, pleaded with, and the door knocked and wearied with importunity, looked and waited upon till He come and reign righteousness upon us. No address can be too bold. But perhaps it will be a caution to me how I improve the liberty my heavenly Father has given me before others. For I would not offend any or cause them to censure me for arrogancy—neither would I tempt any to arrogancy by encouraging them to use expressions which they have not learned and proved.

DESIRE OF EVERY PREACHER OF THE TRUTH.

It is the earnest desire of every preacher that is sent of God, that his doctrine may be received and may have the desired effect for which it is sent. And it is to be promiscuously preached to every creature who is under heaven. And wherever it is preached and not received, it is the wickedness of those persons who repel or neglect it. It is true it is by the special influence of the Spirit of Grace that any soul receives it in the life and power to a vital union with Christ to eternal salvation and eternal life. But it is in the power of every man to receive it as might be to his great advantage. And it is their own heart wickedness that rejects it, and will be the heaviest stone in their damnation.

REPENTANCE.

God never calls men to repentance but with the prospect of escaping some evil by escaping the sin that leads to it, "but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." But men finding

eternal life and glory ascribed to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God make it a pretext for their wickedness, pretending that they do not know they are of the elect, and then it signifies nothing what they do. But this is an infallible mark of a reprobate mind. The gospel brings souls to life and glory. Faith coming by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Now be it observed that there is a repentance which must first be produced before a person can receive the word of God with power. The Jew from his enmity—the Gentile from his idolatry—the debauchee from his wild career—and the self-righteous from his vain conceit of himself, etc. Though this is not repentance unto life it was things of this kind which the Apostle called men to repent of that they might attend to the gospel whereby they might receive that faith, which would produce internal genuine repentance unto life. The Apostles did not admonish persons to any virtue that might be any part of their salvation. Look and see all their admonitions were only to attend to the Gospel, or to desist from those things that hindered their attention. They never proposed anything in whole or in part as matter of salvation, but Jesus Christ. And it was His own richness and grace that Jesus preached that they might be saved—and that they might have their sins blotted out by the same grace that Jesus preached. Carnal persons either expect to share the glory of their own salvation or they expect that God should operate on them as mere machines, or they show their enmity by asking captious questions and endeavouring to pick up objections, absurdities, and contradictions. It is because their stubbornness cannot submit to the righteousness of God. It is the serpent.

TENDENCY OF GOSPEL.

The tendency of the whole gospel is to bring every creature to salvation and every soul under heaven that ever received the truth in the love of it found it to be the power of God unto salvation. None are shut out, but they that shut themselves out. But if their hearts burn with enmity against God and are set upon cavilling and finding quilligrams and charge God foolishly unless He will tell them His secrets and empty His ocean into their nutshell, how can those expect anything but damnation?

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM CONTINUE DURING LIFE.

The blessings of the kingdom continue to be communicated from the first of our calling to the end of our lives as the Scripture

clearly manifests, and I can witness having been under the dews of His grace 57 years. Yet we may consider these communications as consisting of three operations. 1st. When we receive the gospel of our salvation to behold the Son in His mediatorial character made sin for us. 2nd. The baptism of the Holy Ghost which Christ has promised to those that believe in Him. 3rd. The growing up into all the riches of Christ by the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is a book constructed by the hands of men, composed of paper, ink, and the art of writing. This is not the word of God. It is only the tare or case in which it is conveyed. It can only convey to our senses the theory of the word. Just so can the lips of Ministers convey the image to the ear—but not the life and power. The Word (or Son of God) is God giving Himself to us.

ORDER IN WHICH GRACE PROCEEDS.

Now observe the order in which the grace of God proceeds. The Gospel is sent in the public ministration. The vital power to the soul is communicated by the spirit. The gospel thus received in truth the soul thus believes the promise of the Father and believing He waits for it till he receives it, and having received it he is thereby guided into the deeper mysteries, richer blessings, and higher glories of the gospel (John 16, 13, 14, 15).

ASSURANCE.

Tell them I have not so learned Christ. I have both seen Him, heard Him, and been taught by Him as the truth is in Jesus. I am not of one mind one year and another mind another year in things so high, so sublime, of such importance as the eternal life in which I dwell and which dwells in me. It is not the husk, the shell, the sound of words, the empty notion, the vague opinion of election as a topic of logic, or a theory of school divinity, or a criterion to try who are orthodox that my soul lives upon. It is the essence of *I am* the very existence of Jehovah. God is Love from everlasting to everlasting; that is my life—life which never did begin to be; only it began to be manifest. Neither can it ever cease to be, nor can its glory abate so long as God continues to be the Lord. This God is our God for ever and ever (Psalm 90, 1, 2). This is the centre where my soul for ever resides, glories, and rejoices. But will your people understand that that is the same with Election? or had I better cease lest they condemn what they do not understand.

MIXED COMPANY.

As to 1 Cor. 5, 11. It is not spoken of Christian communion. I do not suppose if I occasionally come to a table and such a man as described is there among others that I am not to eat because he is present—but not to keep company with him—shun his conversation.

SEPARATE STATE.

As to the separate state. I do not find any description of it, or know how it will be, but as my soul never did receive any intelligence of any kind whatsoever but through the organs of the body—the senses—and as the body will be laid aside I do not know if the soul will receive any new intelligence, but will be in a state purely cogitative, feeding on what he has heard and seen before, and if so it must be a state exceedingly delightful for he will wait in the patience and joy of the Lord (Rev. 6, 11). All pain of body and all sorrow of mind, all drowsiness of spirit and all temptations for ever banished, and his soul enlarged to view in a much clearer light the glories of the gospel as the Apostles understood the teachings of the Lord much more clear after He ascended.

I find nothing in the word of God to give me any different idea of the saints departed before the coming of Christ. They had the same spirit, faith, and hope in their measure. All the difference is what we enjoy in the present life beyond what was revealed to them.

DIVINE PERSONS.

As to the word or phrase, divine persons. I do not think there is any absurdity in the words themselves if construed in meekness. But perhaps it were more prudent to use other expressions because of the gross ideas commonly fixed to the word person.

SUFFICIENCY OF THE SPIRIT.

I know that the Lord is all sufficient and if we but knit together in one spirit the Lord will be amongst us, and we shall yet grow. Whether the Lord has any souls in this place to add unto us, it is what we cannot know until He shall please to bring them to us, but those that He has called shall assuredly be fed (Isaiah 33, 16). This is all the desire of my heart—the calling of sinners unto the very kingdom of God in the spirit, truth, life, and power of the gospel of the grace of God, and the building up of the saints on their most holy faith. I think not a straw of all notions, opinions, and speculations even of gospel truth any further than those truths are received into the hearts and are received in the power, the love, the

life the spirit of Jesus. It is true without just ideas of the word of grace. God never works in the dark, but it is not for the sake of just ideas, but for the sake of the life, power, glory, and spirit and truth of those ideas to be written in their hearts, the saints attend to the gospel of Christ.

NON-ELECT.

As to the non-elect. Whatever alloy or mitigation there may be in the punishment of the wicked I know not. God will never lay anything to any man's charge of which he is not guilty. Yea, God will never lay any evil upon any man as from Himself. They cannot suffer anything but what shall naturally proceed from the fire of that wickedness and the worm of their guilty consciences. And as they have behaved during life here and the condition unto which they have brought themselves, be it better or worse, so shall they stand in the day of Judgment and be adjudged thereto for ever.

As to those that die in innocency, we can only judge by circumstances how they may be disposed of, as it is impossible that they should suffer damnation, and it is not mentioned that any shall enjoy eternal glory only those that by faith wait for it, and it is certain a new heaven and earth shall be which will not be created in vain, but to be inhabited and it is certain that will not be a residence either for Saints or sinners (2 Peter **3**, 13 ; John **14**, 3 ; Matt. **25**, 46). Therefore rationally we may conclude, etc.

ADMONITION.

And now if I might give a word of admonition to all the brethren I would earnestly caution you against criticisms or dwelling upon the sound of words or stickling for the meaning of certain phrases to maintain some peculiar opinions. No man ever grew fat with cracking nuts. It is the marrow of the gospel whereby we may be led into the fulness of God and of the Father and of Christ. That is the necessary thing. There is nothing written in the word of God but what is by inspiration of God and for our learning and admonition, but I would always advise persons to attend both to those things that are most immediately necessary, and the other things will come of course to the understanding in the proper season. A youth going to learn any business or science must not begin with the highest branch first. He might tease and torment his brains with a thing which would come to him without any trouble if he would patiently pursue the subject in proper order.

May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God that you may press towards the true mark in these four things. 1. That you may be purified and refined from internal pollution. 2. That you may be kept guarded and defended against temptation and the evil of the world. 3. That you may be sanctified by the word and spirit of truth to bear the image of the Son of God. 4. That you may bring glory to His Holy Name.

POWER OF EVERY MAN.

It is in the power of every man who hears the gospel to receive it if he will. Christ did not charge the defect upon the *power* but upon the *will*. See His words, John 5, 40. God never reaped where He had not sown, nor required what He had not given. It is true that none can receive it in the life and power, but by the Holy Ghost, but every one that receives the word in sincerity waits for the blessing till his soul is blessed with the life, the truth, and the grace. (1 Thess. 1, 5). This is the declaration of God, and no soul was ever disappointed (Romans 10, 12, 13).

God has left nothing undone that is possible to be done in a ministerial way so far as relates to the use of means for the salvation of all—men themselves being judges (Isaiah 5, 34). But the will of men is so refractory, stubborn, rebellious, and incorrigible, that all the means that God can use are altogether insufficient until He exert His omnipotence flaming in love to melt the obdurate heart which, when He does, the soul comes with all his powers (Jer. 3, 22), otherwise no soul in the universe ever turns to God (Prov. 1, 30, 31). Certainly Christ is under no obligation to exert His almighty power upon all men in spite of all their determined objection. But He will do it to all that the Father hath given him (John 6, 3 ; 17, 2). All the rest choose, yea, determinately, damnation and will at the last day confess that they had their own choice.

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

Forgiveness of sins is the taking away the cursed thing from our hearts.

REGENERATION.

Regeneration or being born again brings the believer to live by the faith of the Son of God. But without this life of faith the radicated stain of sin can never be purged away. The life of Jesus is of a nature so far superior to any life we had before that whether we had sinned or we had not, we could not enjoy Him

without being new creatures. And since we sinned, our state is so inconceivably wretched that nothing short of the special grace of life and truth can take away the pollution.

CHURCH OF CORINTH.

Respecting 1 Cor. 12, this Church of Christ at Corinth was much blessed with spiritual gifts (chap. 1, 5, 7), and it seems as if the Apostle had some jealousy of their being lifted up, or making some wrong use of them (see 2 Cor. 12, 7). He therefore cautions them not to be ignorant (v. 1) reminding them (v. 2) of their former wretched condition, and (v. 3) that Christ is all in all where the spirit dwells, and that it is the same spirit of Christ, and of the Father that worketh all these things, and that it should not be any cause for one to think of himself more highly than of another. All things are of God. Then he comes to particulars. The word of wisdom—so enlightened by the gospel as to look deep into the hidden wisdom of God (chap. 2, 7), knowledge so as to open the abstruse parts of scripture and dark sentences (chap. 13, 2). Faith so as to be able without wavering to depend firmly upon what God's word teaches us. (2 Cor. 4, 13). Gifts of healing. These are ceased in the external operation, but may remain in regard to the spiritual infirmities of the saints or any division in the Church (Gal. 6, 1; Heb. 12, 13). Miracles, signs; the truth of the substance being fully established, these have ceased. Prophecy, prediction has ceased, but opening and holding forth the word of life remains (chap. 14, 1, 3). Discerning of spirits, this is a gift necessary in the Church, but not enjoyed by all (1 John 4, 1, 6). Kinds of tongues with their interpretation ceased (chap. 14, 22). It is easy to see what the Apostle intended to impress upon them and upon us. The perfect unity of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in all His communications and operations, and the unity of the Church in the One Three. That variety is necessary to the completion of unity, and that we are to look at one another as the very parts of ourselves, and every one filling up their stations in their several capacities to complete the whole.

HOLINESS.

Holiness is the dignity, perfection, glory, and excellency of any being. In the fullest extent there is none holy but the Lord (1 Sam. 2, 2), yet there is a created, devoted, and communicated holiness in creatures for nothing can come from God but what is perfection. Therefore so long as man preserved his created dignity

he was a holy creature. Under the law everything devoted unto the Lord was ceremonially holy so long as it continued unprofaned. The Saints through union with Christ are spiritually holy, and every creature is holy so long as it stands in the perfection which God gave it. But then there is this difference between God and creatures. His is the fountain ; theirs is the drop from the fountain. He is immutable and cannot be profaned ; theirs is mutable and liable to be profaned. Only observe the believer enjoys holiness through vital union with Christ, and it cannot be lost because it is Christ dwelling in him. " Because I live ye shall live also."

The gospel is an universal proclamation as general as words can make it (Isaiah 55, 1 ; 51, 10), and no soul ever was saved except upon this universal plan.

NON-ELECT.

In regard to the holy law of God and the condemnation which we are all under through violating that law, I know no difference between elect and non-elect. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. As to the non-elect. Christ tasted death for every creature and the gospel is preached to every creature under heaven. But they will not come to him that they might have life. It is His will that all should be saved (John 5, 34), and all that have heard the gospel shall be judged by the gospel (John 12, 48).

If you can depend on your own memory I can tell you when you lost this power. It was after you did know what the law of God requires of you, and you disregarded the will of God to gratify your own will.

FALSE CHARITY.

Not to be censorious. Soft words are most acceptable ; we should not be too harsh ; we should not be over positive ; people would receive things much better in milder terms. We ought to hope there are many good people that are not of our breadth and length, etc. The saints have not so learned Christ (2 Cor. 6, 14, 15, 16, 17). If we do not keep our distance from religious people and repel all their fair speeches, flatteries, and mollifying arguments, we may as well give up all pretence of being disciples of Christ.

CARNAL PROFESSORS.

The carnal professors think of returning to God the same way that they left Him. Some that they must do it by their own work. Some that they must do a part and God a part, and others

that they must do the whole in some chimerical way. But all expect to terminate at the same point from which they departed, not understanding that the original life is totally dead and can never be restored. But by another kind of life the man becomes a new creature. Man has lost his life of natural virtue, but a spiritual life never existed but in Christ Jesus.

TOO MUCH TENDERNESS.

I am very sorry that our friends (under pretence of tenderness) should connive at sin, for whatever the sin be, every person in the Church is equally guilty as the real offender so long as they acknowledge him as a brother after the crime is manifest. Observe the guilt lies upon the Church so long as he stands a member for while they retain him in communion they abet his sin, be it what it will, for while the old leaven remains it cannot be unleavened. See (Matt. 18, 17 ; 1 Cor. 5, 25 ; 6, 7, 11, 13 ; Rev. 2, 14, 30 ; Josh. 7, 11, 12, 13).

INFLUENCE OF THE SPIRIT.

The Lord said to His Father " Thy word is truth," and promised His disciples that the Spirit should guide them unto all truth. And Paul describes the Spirit's work (2 Cor. 3, 3 ; 1 Thess. 1, 5). We do not think the Spirit goes before the word, or the word before the Spirit in quickening souls. But they are quickened by the word in the power of the Spirit or vice versa by the Spirit in the light of the word. They are joined together in regeneration (John 3, 5 ; Gal. 3, 2) is not spoken of the first receiving of life, but of the promise of the Holy Ghost which is made known to us by the word of faith and waited for by every believer, and by this abundant life or baptism of the Spirit of Truth we are guided into the higher glories and abundant blessings of the gospel (John 14, 26).

PRAYER.

You desire my thoughts on the subject of prayer and in what point of view it is the duty of all men. If by duty we understand an obligation or service done to the person prayed to there is no man of commonsense but he knows better. If a petition be made or favour asked of any prince, or nobleman, or superior does he esteem it a duty performed or a service done to him ? If thanks and praise were called a duty it would look more like commonsense. Yet that is no duty any further than it proceeds from a deep sense of the goodness of the Holy One. Yet there is something in prayer that may be called duty—that is to consider ourselves and our

manifold wants and immediate dependence upon God, and knowing who can relieve and supply us, and having His promise that He will hear and answer, makes it indispensable in respect to ourselves. And it certainly is a duty towards our fellow creatures if we see them in distress and if we have freedom at the throne of grace to represent their case before the Lord. But considering persons as sinners and yet in an empty way approaching before God as a duty, work, or performance—this is perfect mockery. For their persons are abominable, and yet they have the insolence to mock the most high God in the most contemptible manner. And yet the Lord has heard the cries of sinners—not for any merit in them, but for His own tender compassion (Gen. 21, 17 ; Jonah 1, 14, 15). When they see their distress and cry for mercy the Lord has pleased to hear them. True prayer comes only from a child of God who can call Him Father, and it cannot be without the soul knowing His own situation and condition nor without knowing God in His promises. But to talk of the worship of God in its true light to the world is a vain thing. But the believing soul is truly enlightened according to the word of truth—and knows the true God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit of Grace, and attends to the pure gospel of Christ to learn wherein consisteth the pure worship of God. And he worshippeth God in spirit, rejoicing in Christ having no confidence in the flesh. He is taught of God and prays to the Father through Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit. He prays for the promise of the Father to guide him into all truth. That is the fulness of Christ that He may indeed come to the Father and be filled with His holy spirit, and may walk with God in righteousness and true holiness. A true Christian is born of God a new creature, he dwells in God and God in him. Christ Jesus is his life and the spirit of God dwells in him. That is the very life of the Son of God, and he is verily made one spirit with Him that is the life of all blessedness. He that has the same mind, the same will, and the same spirit that was in the Lord of Glory is certain to be an heir with Him in the kingdom of the Father. They do not perform any part as a task—but they delight to approach to God to enjoy the blessings of His love and that they may enjoy more and more of His spirit, and have their souls formed into the image of His Son. And the Lord teaches and commands them to pray—as a father calls his children to come to the table, to go to bed, and rise at proper times, to wash and keep themselves clean, to attend the school, to avoid any dangers, to exercise themselves in anything that may be for their health and improvement. But these things are

not done as a service nor any benefit to the father, only for the children's good. And as the father delights in their happiness, so the fountain of all blessings cannot possibly receive anything from us but He commands our attendance (that is all that are called to be His children), that we may be happy and increase in all the blessings of His kingdom—and that we may be useful to one another until we all come in the unity of the spirit unto the perfect man in Christ Jesus the Lord (Eph. 4, 13).

As you observe it is necessary to distinguish between what proceeds immediately from our Father, and what we bring upon ourselves by our own unguardedness, inattention, or own misconduct.

UNIVERSALITY OF THE GOSPEL.

You desire me to point out all those passages of Scripture that I can collect that relates to the universal spread of the Gospel. If I must point out all the passages that relate to that glorious event I must transcribe a great part of the Bible. For this appears to have been in view from the very first—and through all the old and new testaments. Is not the anointed called the seed of the woman? And she was the mother of all living (Gen. 3, 15, 20). Did not Enoch the seventh from Adam prophesy of this time? (Jude 14, 15). Did not Noah by faith prepare an ark to the saving of his house in which was included the salvation of all creatures (Heb. 11, 7), and was not this a prelude to the salvation of God to all nations? (Gen. 9, 17). The Apostle speaks of it in an unlimited style (Romans 15, 9-12). But let us come to determined expressions (Genesis 12, 3; Psalms 2, 8; 72, 8; Daniel, 2, 44; 7, 14; Isaiah 11, 9; 49, 6; Heb. 2, 14; Zech 14, 9; Mal. 1, 11; Matt. 24, 14; Romans 16, 24; Rev. 7, 9; 11, 15; 14, 6). What can be said more than what is said? (Isaiah 3, 10; Rev. 11, 15).

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH ON EARTH.

What the Lord is about to do with His Church we do not know, nor how near the time is when His witnesses will be killed. But one thing seems to be a strong prelude thereof—that is the flourishing of religion; for it is certain that it will be by that which bears the name of Christian religion, the witnesses of the grace and glory of God will be banished from the earth.

MISCELLANEOUS.

Unless Christ were God over all He could not give life, and unless He were the perfect nature of man He could not bring salvation. But if He did not possess all the faculties of the human

nature He could not be man, and if He had not all our feelings in perfection (Heb. 4, 15), He could not be that tender sympathising High Priest that He is.

Without human virtue (by men called morality) no man can be a Christian (Luke 16, 11, 12), yet it is no part of Christianity. A Jew, a heathen, a Mahometan may have it, and all pretences to spirituality are vain if not under the guidance of the word of God (Matt. 25, 23).

If people enjoy Christ in this life, they are certain to enjoy Him at their death.

I do not say there never was a soul called upon a death bed, but I think it exceedingly rare, if ever. Some urge the thief upon the Cross. But how long that malefactor had been in prison, how long since his crime, or how long his mind had been employed respecting the Christ of God, before he had an opportunity to express himself no living man can tell.

The purest Churches may receive hypocrites for they cannot search hearts. A Church does not cease to be a Church of Christ because some deceivers have crept in, but when hypocrites grow so numerous and powerful in a Church, that Church becomes a synagogue of Satan.

To preach the gospel of the Son of God no man can teach another, nor can he learn it himself but by the special illumination of the Spirit (1 Cor. 2, 4, 13 ; Gal. 1, 1, 12).

ROBERT REYNOLDSON.

MEMOIR OF ROBERT REYNOLDSON.

The family of the Reynoldsons were for several generations well-to-do farmers in Lincolnshire. Thomas Reynoldson, the father of Robert, the subject of this memoir, was born at the village of Addlethorpe, but in commencing business removed to Orby, a small hamlet at a little distance. Heavy losses occasioned by the serious depreciation of farming produce, consequent upon the American War of Independence, caused his return to his native place or more strictly speaking to Ingoldmells, a village adjoining. Here he entered upon the occupation of a drover, in which business he took cattle on commission to the London Markets for sale, not by any means an unluccrative employment prior to the introduction of railways. Before taking the farm at Orby, he married Frances Louth, by whom he had fourteen children, eight only of whom reached maturity, five sons and three daughters—Robert, the fourth son, the subject of this memoir, was born November 29th, 1793. The locality in which the family lived was not distinguished by much beauty of scenery being of much the same character as the dreariest parts of the fenland. A large proportion of the land was used for pasture, and there was everywhere a painful lack of trees or hedges to relieve the monotony of the panorama. The usual divisions between the fields were dikes, and in one of these in close vicinity to Mr. Thomas Reynoldson's dwelling, Robert at the age of two had a providential escape from drowning. He was playing near the edge of the ditch in company with his two sisters, Ann and Susan, each somewhat older than himself, when he slipped in, and sank immediately. The older of the two girls—Ann, aged about seven, in her terror ran off and hid herself in a neighbouring shed, leaving so far as she was concerned the unfortunate infant to his fate. Susan, the other child, however, promptly gave the alarm, shrieking out "Bob is in the dike," bringing to the rescue John, a brother some twelve years old, who succeeded in extricating the drowning child before he was suffocated. This task accomplished, he made search for the delinquent Ann, and administered to her in parental fashion

exemplary chastisement. As the sons became of sufficient age they each assisted the father in his business, and Robert with his brothers was trained to the occupation of a drover. His school and business education commenced at very nearly the same period—at the age of nine. During the summer he was employed in the droving, and in the winter he was sent to school. In consequence of this arrangement Mr. Reynoldson himself considered that his term of school tuition did not amount altogether to more than some three years. This space of time was passed in two schools, one kept by James Teesdale at Addlethorpe, the other by Robert Holmes at a neighbouring village called Hogsthorpe. As to the quality of the instruction given, the two schools were pretty much upon an equality. In each it was not greatly superior to those Yorkshire schools which have been held up to infamy by a popular writer. The instruction in the opinion of our late friend could not compare for a moment with that given in the worst of our British or other elementary schools. It was miserably poor. In each school was taught reading, writing, and arithmetic, the latter up to vulgar or decimal fractions moderately well, but in neither did the pupils ever see a grammar book. Mr. Reynoldson, however, knew at this time that there was such a thing as grammar, because at the end of his “Vyses’ Spelling Book” there were some references to it. Although the instruction did not materially differ in the two schools there was considerable dissimilarity in the masters. Mr. Teesdale, the Addlethorpe teacher, was an irascible churl, who was wont when angry to stamp with his heavy heeled boots upon the toes of his unhappy scholars. Holmes, the schoolmaster of Hogsthorpe, was a good-natured easy man, who had married the daughter of the parson of the parish, and like the generality of the better classes in the neighbourhood, was a tippler. The income of the family was at this time some £400 per annum, a sum in those days sufficient for their station in society, and in justice to Mr. Thomas Reynoldson, it should be said he was by no means niggardly or unaware of the necessity of education to his children, and would have sent Robert to a Boarding School at Surfleet whither he had previously sent his eldest son John, but that the younger lad suffered from chronic ague, the common Fen malady in the days before systematic drainage was adopted. Mention has been made of the early employment of Mr. Thomas Reynoldson’s sons in the business of droving, and when Robert was nine years old a certain proportion of work was assigned to him. He at this age accompanied his brother John to London to

dispose of cattle. The day after the sale he was sent back on his pony all the way to Addlethorpe. The distance was over 100 miles, and involved the passing two nights upon the road. The custom of the drovers to pay the expenses of their two journeys, to and from the metropolis, as they went up to London enabled him to return without a greater expenditure than the payment of tolls. From an early age Robert Reynoldson showed individuality of character. Without positive unsociability of disposition his fondness for reading led him to delight in solitude. At times he joined in the sports of his brothers, but he was never a great lover of games and amusements. This peculiarity coupled with premature sobriety of demeanour procured for him the nickname of the "Old gentleman," and caused his father to consider him a singular lad, and say, "I do not know what to make of my boy Bob, he is not like the others, I never caught him in a lie in my life." Mr. Reynoldson, however, in later life never believed himself to have been much better than his brothers. In the year 1809, when Robert had reached the age of 16, an event occurred which was destined to exercise a great influence on his character and fortunes. John Reynoldson, the elder brother of his father, an influential brewer at Newark-on-Trent, was induced by mercantile considerations to leave the country, and settle with his family in London. He entered into partnership with a Mr. Crane and started an extensive establishment at Bromley called the Imperial Brewery. An exceedingly strong attachment existed between the brothers John and Thomas, and the latter was induced by this circumstance to remove to London taking with him his wife and several children. The family took a house at Bromley and Robert on arriving found employment in the brewery. Prior to his leaving Newark, Mr. John Reynoldson had for some years been the minister of a small Baptist Church in that place. On his coming to London, finding a few friends holding similar sentiments to his own he again assumed the Pastoral office and opened a small chapel in Leman Street near Red Lion Street, Goodman's Fields. The Church thus formed, after a hopeful commencement early sank into decay, but has only wholly ceased to exist within the last half century. Robert Reynoldson had with the other members of the family been an attendant commonly once a day at the formal and lifeless Church worship at Addlethorpe, but as an attendant at his uncle's Chapel, he was now for the first time in his life brought under the beneficial influence of regular attendance every Sabbath at an evangelical place of worship. We have no evidence, however, that he profited

much by these privileges, and indeed, from his own statements as to his religious knowledge at this time, we have undeniable proof that his mind was in gross darkness. He was so extremely careless and ignorant upon all religious questions that his opinions closely resembled, as he said, those of a man named Rasdale, an assistant of Mr. Thomas Reynoldson's, who believed neither in a God nor a devil. Mr. Robert Reynoldson has frequently remarked that he could distinctly remember when he was a well-grown youth reading the story of the crucifixion with an entire ignorance of the issue of the sacred narrative, and with an earnest hope as he read the trial before Pontius Pilate that the Saviour might escape execution. The question may naturally be asked how so recently as the earlier part of the last century such gross ignorance in religious matters could be found in a family occupying the respectable position of the Reynoldson's at Addlethorpe? For no man in the neighbourhood was more generally respected and trusted than Mr. Thomas Reynoldson. The reply is that up to fifty years of age he was at the time his children were growing up, much like his neighbours, neither better nor worse; a complete man of the world, one who when he had paid his debts deemed every obligation performed. The sudden death of one to whom he was so much attached as his brother John, produced a marked change in Thomas Reynoldson's demeanour. His mind was powerfully awakened and the impression still further deepened by listening to a discourse preached by an earnest and eloquent Baptist minister, Mr. Samuel Fisher, of Wisbech, to a few people assembled in a private house. The text was from the words of Christ to the blind man "Dost thou believe on the Son of God." The Holy Spirit accompanied the word to his heart and very speedily led to his conversion. The evidences of this change of heart were exceedingly strong. In his hardened state he had avoided all religious teachings and had even harshly repelled the attempts of a Godly sister to win him to the service of Christ by her earnest persuasions. She had wholly failed to induce him to read the Bible. But from this time forth the Scriptures, formerly his aversion, became the joy of his soul, worldly amusements were strictly forbidden in his house. He burnt his playing cards and entirely banished every game of a gambling character. While Mr. Thomas Reynoldson dealt thus sternly with everything calculated to lead his children into positive sin, and was in all matters of propriety a strict disciplinarian, he was marvellously negligent in obeying the gospel precept which requires the Christian to bring up his children "in the nurture and admon-

ition of the Lord." The idea that great responsibility in this matter rests upon parents never seemed to enter his head, and his omission was more serious in its consequences from the fact that prior to his departure for London no religious services existed in Addlethorpe which he could conscientiously allow his children to attend. The only place where continuous worship was maintained every Sabbath was the Parish Church where prayers were read commonly by Clergy of the type described by Cowper as "The cassocked huntsman and the fiddling priest." It should, however, be said that there were occasional services held in the neighbourhood by itinerant Wesleyans, but unfortunately he had in former years, under some temporary excitement, entered that body, but finding so many discreditable professors amongst the members, he ever after entertained for them the heartiest aversion.

The Imperial Brewery was not a fortunate speculation and its lack of success preyed so heavily on the mind of Mr. John Reynoldson that his health rapidly gave way and he died within some four years of his arrival in London. This event was a crushing calamity to the surviving brother, and determined his immediate return into Lincolnshire. Robert remained behind at the Brewery for some months to watch over the interests of his uncle's family. Shortly after his return to Addlethorpe to the great grief of himself and the other members of the family, Thomas Reynoldson who had never rallied from the effects of the shock occasioned by the decease of his brother John, died after a very short illness at the age of 58. Prior to his death he assembled his family around him, and made an earnest appeal to them to engage in the service of their Creator in the days of their youth. The death-bed utterances of a parent are under ordinary circumstances greatly calculated to produce deep emotion in his children. The dying words however, of a man like Thomas Reynoldson, who had given to his family striking proof of the genuineness of his late conversion, and who moreover had been previously but little accustomed to urge upon his children the things of the Kingdom of Heaven, could hardly fail to make impressions as lasting as human life. Such indeed was their effect. They were the means of awakening an attention to the soul's concerns which resulted ultimately in the salvation of more than one of the children. Robert Reynoldson in later life attributed the full effects upon his mind of his father's dying words to a period somewhat later than the occurrence itself. After reflection, rather than the impressions produced at the time, was an important cause of that awakening of his soul which led to his

salvation. His first serious thoughts were those which enter the minds of almost all ; they related to the uncertainty of life, and the certainty of that account of himself which must be rendered by every one at the Divine Bar. Reference has been made to his great ignorance of the Scriptures as a youth, and it is probable that until just prior to his father's death he was little more enlightened. For at about the age of 18 or 19, hearing his uncle and father in conversation about faith, when mention was made of belief and believers, those phrases being used in the Scripture sense, he mentally remarked " I am a believer." This false conception was, as he told the London Church when giving his confession of faith to obtain fellowship, dispelled suddenly by reading in one of Mr. John Johnson's discourses a quotation from James 2, 19, " The devils also believe and tremble." The true sense of this passage came home to him with an electric shock, and he plainly saw that his faith up to this time had been precisely of the same kind as that of those evil spirits. From this time he became an earnest seeker for an entrance into the Kingdom of God and peace quickly entered his mind. Mr. Reynoldson was baptised in the September of probably the year 1813 by Mr. Thomas Curtis, who had become the pastor of the Church mentioned as worshipping in Leman Street, London. He stayed in London after his baptism until the following February or March. He had when living at Bromley with his family become acquainted with Mr. Curtis, but from this time must be dated that exceedingly close intimacy which was destined to exercise so important an influence on Mr. Reynoldson's career. Mr. Thomas Curtis was a Wisbech man of very considerable literary attainments, who became a partner in the publishing firm of Gale, Fenner and Curtis, well-known as the projectors of the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana*. At the time that Mr. Reynoldson made the acquaintance of this gentleman he possessed but an exceedingly scanty education, as a letter of his own still extant written at the age of 18 or 19 will show. His attainments in grammar and spelling were such as would certainly not now-a-days have enabled him to pass an ordinary school examination. Mr. Curtis, however, saw behind his comparatively rustic exterior and limited scholarship that a true jewel lay concealed. He saw that he possessed intellectual and moral qualities of an exceptionally high order, and as he expressed it " Mr. Reynoldson's mind is the best piece of soil for cultivation that I ever saw." His instructor must needs have bestowed much pains and Mr. Reynoldson himself must needs have worked hard to produce so rapid a change in his education

as occurred in the next two years. The years 1814 and 1815 were years of hard study to him not only in things secular, but in the Scriptures. As to his instruction in the latter it should be observed that both John Reynoldson and Mr. Curtis were fully acquainted with and adopted the views of John Johnson and Fisher. A circumstance connected with his droving at this time will show how ardently he pursued the acquisition of Divine knowledge under difficulties. The then pastor of the Wisbech Church, Mr. R. B. Dawbarn when driving in a gig in company with his deacon, Mr. Wherry, came upon a mounted drover driving his beast on the highway and reading the Bible as he rode along. We are not told that they enquired of him "Understandest thou what thou redest?" but we know that they deemed it a sight not to be commonly seen—a man riding on horseback with an open Bible in his hand. The drover was our friend Robert Reynoldson. About this time he was invited to Wisbech by Mrs. Proctor, a member of Mr. Dawbarn's Church, living on the North Brink; and he accordingly spent a night with her as he journeyed from London into Lincolnshire. He appeared to the Godly females of that family to be marvellously stored with the truths of the Word of God, and as one of them has since said, his Bible seemed never to be out of his hand, being so constantly needed for reference during the whole of his stay. Mrs. Proctor's husband was one who had drunk into the free-thinking sentiments common to the days of Tom Paine and Mr. Reynoldson's zeal led him to reason, ineffectually however, with him on his obstinate scepticism. On his return to Addlethorpe at the request of his aunt, Mrs. Joseph Louth, the earnest Christian woman already alluded to as the sister who sought to seriously impress Mr. Thomas Reynoldson, he commenced to preach in her house to the assembled neighbours—who showed their high satisfaction by coming to hear him in numbers too large for the limited space provided. It was a family arrangement, and probably the wish of Mr. Thomas Reynoldson that his son John should at his decease farm certain land which had been in his own occupation and that Robert should continue to carry on the droving, for his own benefit. Mr. Curtis strongly opposed Mr. Robert Reynoldson's continuance in the droving business, and by his influence succeeded in the winter of 1815 in inducing him to maintain himself as a teacher. He became a tutor to the children of his cousin, John Louth. It will be seen that Mr. Reynoldson's separation from business in order to his devotion to the ministry was wholly due to Mr. Curtis. And not only for this service but

for that of superintending his education, the Churches generally, and Wisbech in particular owe him much thanks. The companionship of a scholar and a poet as was Mr. Curtis was in itself a great advantage to Mr. Reynoldson, but he further enjoyed through that gentleman's hospitality intercourse with men of high reputation as for instance, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Dr. Cox, who were each at this time busy in their labour on the *Encyclopædia*. The instruction of Mr. Louth's children was interrupted by the alarming prostration of Mr. Reynoldson with typhus. By this deadly malady he was brought to the brink of the grave. He was at the time of this illness living in Addlethorpe with his mother and sister Susan, who in his own opinion were quite competent to have nursed him, but Mr. Curtis' solicitude for his recovery led him to send down his sister Ann—afterwards Mrs. Dawes. She nursed him with great self devotion, but herself suffered severely from the disorder. Mr. Curtis further showed his deep interest by going shortly afterwards into Lincolnshire to see him. On his recovery the congregation formed by Mr. Reynoldson's preaching built him a Chapel, and he commenced teaching a day school in the vestry. He had a fair number of scholars, and among them youths from Wisbech. The bad conduct of some of Mr. Reynoldson's members, with other troubles broke up the cause established at Addlethorpe, and he was led to remove to Wisbech in the year 1820. He took a school in Upper Hill Street kept by a person named Walker and continued to teach in it until the close of his business career in 1846. Almost immediately on his arriving in Wisbech he commenced preaching at Wool Hall. He did, indeed, preach some once or twice for the friends in Upper Hill Street, but just at this juncture a most serious breach occurred between those people and the Church in London, consequent upon some very wrong conduct of Mr. Curtis. Mr. Reynoldson was at this time misled by that gentleman's plausible defence espoused his cause, and felt himself compelled to separate from the Wisbech friends. He speedily, by the popularity of his preaching drew together a considerable congregation at Wool Hall, and formed a Church, the members of which were remarkably attached to him. Mr. Curtis visited Wisbech in the year 1821 or 1822, and while in the town made arrangements with Mr. Jarrom, the late esteemed pastor of Ely Place Chapel and principal of a small theological seminary to undertake the instruction in Greek and Hebrew of Mr. Reynoldson. For his instructor, Mr. Reynoldson, in after life always entertained the highest esteem, and was accustomed to quote his sayings,

especially in matters of Church government. It was in the year 1824 that Mr. Reynoldson entered wedlock, uniting with one for whom from that time to the day of his death he cherished the warmest affection. It is a rather singular circumstance that the lady he married—Miss Ann Crowder—was his successor as the instructor of Mr. John Louth's children at the time he was prostrated by typhus. Prior to his connection with Mrs. Reynoldson, his affection had been closely engaged by two other ladies. The first was a Miss Arabella Brown, a member of the Established Church, whose acquaintance he formed before his conversion. This great change in his views as to sacred things led him to break off the engagement, for he felt he had now nothing in common with Miss Brown. He fully opened his mind to her and obtained from her a release. When parting he presented her with a Bible and said "This Book it is which has separated us ; may it again be the means of uniting us." His second engagement was with a christian young lady named Ann Richardson who afterwards married the late Mr. John Smith, Merchant, of March. He had a very warm feeling of regard for this person, and he felt deeply when the connection was broken off. Prior to this event Mr. Reynoldson had become aware that in the matters in dispute between the Churches in Upper Hill Street, Wisbech, and London, Mr. Curtis' conduct was indefensible. In the May of the year, 1826 his mind was so fully decided upon this question that he returned to the friends in Upper Hill Street. Even when he was separated from them, and was preaching in Wool Hall he was an object of their sincere respect and when he sought to unite with them he was received with the utmost cordiality. Such was the high esteem with which they regarded him that they at once asked him to assist the aged pastor of the Church in the public ministration. He forthwith relieved him of one service on the Sabbath—that in the evening, and shortly afterwards he sometimes undertook the conduct of the morning worship also. Mr. R. B. Dawbarn died in 1829, and from that time forth Mr. Reynoldson became the minister of the congregation, receiving, however, in his labours much assistance from one of the deacons of the Church. Mr. Reynoldson had been ordained to the general work of the ministry by Mr. Thomas Curtis, but a formal appointment to the charge of the Wisbech Church was made on behalf of the people, April 11th, 1830, by Mr. Stephenson, of Newark. The new pastor did not come to Upper Hill Street alone for he had gathered to himself in Wool Hall as we have seen, many attached followers, members of his Church and congregation, and in order

that sittings should be provided for them all, the erection of additional galleries in Upper Hill Street Chapel became necessary. Under his ministry the Church and congregation continued to increase in numbers and in 1839—40, the place of worship in which the friends then met was enlarged. A further lapse of time—about eighteen years—found the building again too small for the congregation and in 1858-59 the present Chapel was built. Mr. Reynoldson's health failed somewhat shortly after the completion of the new Chapel. He suffered from insomnia, but continued to perform the duties of a pastor with more or less intermission and assistance, until shortly before his death. It is interesting to note that he availed himself of the hours of sleeplessness to write to some of his members who lived at a distance from Wisbech, giving them notes of discourses just delivered or which were about to be delivered by him, that they were unable to hear. Many of those letters have been preserved.

The pastor died 30th October, 1871.

NOTE.—This biography was compiled years ago by the Editor's late brother, who bore the same name as his grandfather, former Minister of the Wisbech Chapel, viz., R. B. Dawbarn. He married a lady related to the Reynoldson family—was a member for many years of Mr. Reynoldson's Church at Wisbech—an intimate friend of the pastor—and thus had unusual facilities for acquiring the details necessary for such a compilation.—EDITOR].

[I have selected from Mr. Reynoldson's publications one entitled "A Discourse on the doctrine of Election as contained in the Scriptures and connected with the love of God towards all mankind." It shows the identity of the principal doctrines which he preached with those of Johnson and Fisher, and is important, as Mr. Reynoldson was the representative of the largest Church and congregation in the Society from 1829 when Mr. R. B. Dawbarn, the aged minister died, until his own death in 1871. This Discourse is the substance of three Sermons delivered in Upper Hill Street Chapel, Wisbech, in the year 1845.—EDITOR].

DISCOURSE.

"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."—Romans 8, 29.

The Holy Scriptures, which are a revelation of God, and from God to man, affirm their own plainness, and their adaptation to the human understanding. "All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge" (Prov. 8, 8, 9). "Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech" (2 Cor. 3, 12). This plainness is necessary to give satisfaction to the mind, which, with a view to eternal life, pursues the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ whom He hath sent; for while one views things of eternal moment in a mist, his faith in these things cannot be of a very stable character, and his perplexity must needs be great: just as one who beholds objects of sense through a hazy atmosphere, and who is incapable on that account, of arriving at any certainty as to their real nature. Those whom the Holy Spirit guides into all Truth, enlightened by the plainness of divine revelation, arrive at that "full assurance of understanding," which alone can give satisfaction in the "full assurance of faith" and of hope.

Nevertheless, although we have in the Holy Scriptures a revelation of the things of God, "plain to him that understandeth," we are admonished in these very Scriptures, that there is a bounding line between the known and the unknown things of God, and that it is within the region of things revealed that we must exercise our faculties. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29, 29). Nor is the line, between secret things and things revealed, arbitrary. The things that are secret belong to God and not to us, because they are not comprehensible and not practicable to us; and things that are revealed belong to us and to our children for ever, because they are to us practicable:—"that we *may do* all the words of

this law." It is within the assigned region of revealed truth that we must, in following on to know the Lord, and the ways of the Lord, exercise our understanding. Adventurous minds, and not unfrequently, weak minds, attempt to overstep the boundary between the known and the unknown ; and what is this but mortal beings attempting to invade the regions of celestial light before the time ? It is a vain thing to attempt to solve questions which the Scriptures do not answer, and to seek for information which they do not afford. The clearing up of things that are secret may be safely deferred, upon the credit due to the perfection of the character of God, until the light of a future day shall reveal them. "He is the Rock, His work is perfect : for all His ways are judgment : a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He " (Deut. 32, 4). " Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ? " (Gen. 18, 25). Those who know the living God in truth, will not demand a scrutiny into all His ways, that they may place their confidence in Him. This would be to treat Him, as they would a man of doubtful character. They can place implicit confidence in His truth, justice, holiness, and love ; and are never curious to go beyond the region He has assigned for them to explore, in the Scriptures of His Word. What is written there they believe, and, with His grace, endeavour to understand ; and what stretches beyond the limits of their knowledge, does not give them a moment's disquietude.

It must be confessed, that, notwithstanding plainness is attributed to the things of divine revelation, still, as we approach the confines of revealed truth, the line at which faith must make a stand, we meet with things hard to be understood, and things concerning which the Christian will express his mind with much more diffidence and caution, than he feels needful when speaking of things of a plainer and more elementary character. The apostle Peter, speaking of the epistles of Paul, whom he calls " our beloved brother Paul," says :—" As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to be understood , which they that are unlearned (untaught or unteachable) and unstable (not established in the faith of Christ) wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." Peter here treats the epistles of Paul as a part of the Holy Scriptures, " given by inspiration of God," and as of the same character as " the other Scriptures." And what he says concerning some things in these epistles being " hard to be understood," and concerning the violence done to these things by the unlearned and unstable, is calculated to induce us to proceed warily in the interpretation

of our text ; for surely have we here, and in all corresponding parts of the sacred writings, some of those things which are hard to be understood.

The doctrine contained in this text is not frequently introduced in public addresses in this place. We do not find that it entered into the popular addresses of the apostles of Christ, as it did in their more private epistles. There is some difficulty in speaking upon this doctrine to a promiscuous assembly like yours. All of you have not been established upon even the principles of the doctrine of Christ ; and the understandings of many of you, have not been disciplined to receive the transcendent truth contained in these words. The case of some of you is similar to that of the disciples of the Lord Jesus, when He intimated to them a reserve that He had made in His preaching, on account of their inability to understand the whole of His doctrine ; “ I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now ” (John 16, 12). Yet, my dear friends, the Holy Scriptures are in the hands of you all ; and I presume that you read them, as you are exhorted to do ; and, sometimes, the epistle to the Romans, in which are the words of our text, known and read of all, who give their attention to the Sacred Writings. Hence I need not scruple to proclaim what I understand to be the truth contained in these words. If the doctrine contained in the text should not be the subject of public teaching at all, some even in the Church would probably lose sight of it, grow sceptical concerning it, or, to say the least, entertain sentiments concerning it, crude and distorted. Now, there is no truth of the Scriptures which the Church should not receive and maintain ; for the Church is “ the pillar and ground of the truth ” (1 Tim. 3, 15).

The Scriptures do not teach you this truth for the mere purpose of filling up the articles of your creed ; and your zeal for it should not aim at this as its end ; it is for your practical use, and for your real enjoyment. In it you have an incentive to holiness, and a source of enjoyment, which you cannot have if you do not receive it, or if it be with you a matter of little esteem. The apostle, when he penned this doctrine in his epistle to the Romans, did not seek to teach a theory for their speculation, but to establish their faith and hope, and to minister to their consolation. In the verse before the text, he says, “ And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose.” And all things do work together for good to them who love God, just because He, who has all things

under His control and management, has a supreme purpose concerning those that love Him. To His eternal and immutable purpose, all things under His omnipotent government are made subservient. Hence, dear friends, we have the satisfactory conviction, that the Almighty Being in whom we trust has a supreme purpose, and also a providential government over all things concerning us, during the course of our pilgrimage. We know that nothing—"neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature"—shall contravene the purpose of God in the least degree, or harm those who are the called according thereto. He whose purpose it is, has all things under His control, and directs them with a steady aim to the conformity of His saints to the image of His Son.

Sometimes the truth concerning God's eternal purpose towards His chosen people, is viewed as the ground of defence and security, of what Satan, with the world in his train, is in arms to destroy. The enemy sometimes succeeds to "over-throw the faith of some. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." (2 Tim. 2, 18, 19). This truth is also introduced to direct our attention and our gratitude to the source of all spiritual blessings; "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. (Eph. 1, 3, 4). Some important design for its introduction is always to be looked for. The Scriptures teach and establish the truth, to supply a source of enjoyment, or a motive for holiness, to the people of God; and this is the only proper reason we can have for making it a subject of public instruction.

We shall direct our attention, 1. To the object of the purpose of God—the conformity of His people to the image of His Son. 2. To the purpose of God with regard to this object. 3. To the connection which this purpose has with the love of God towards all mankind.

1. The object of the purpose of God:—"to be conformed to the image of His Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren."

We shall here, for the present at least, assume the correctness of our translation of the original, which shows conformity to the image of the Son of God to be the *end* or *object*, and not the prompting

cause, of the purpose of God towards His people. And it is a matter of primary importance, for the right understanding of the doctrine contained in the text, to have a right view of the object, and end, for which God pre-determined His people. And as I consider the right interpretation of this doctrine of God's eternal purpose, to hinge upon a Scriptural understanding of the object of that purpose, I first of all submit this to your attention.

1. The first step in the work of conforming the people of God to the image of His Son, was in the formation of the natural man. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness : and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him " (Gen. 1, 26, 27). This is not the language of counsel—the Father counselling with the Son, as to this part of His work—as the commentators imagine, but the language of determination ; and as plainly expresses the determination of the Creator, as does the language, " Let there be light." That the language in which God expressed His determination to make man in His own image is peculiar, and differs from that used in reference to any other of His successive productions, is granted. This may be accounted for, on the ground that man should bear a relationship to God, and to a higher kingdom than that of nature, which did not belong to any other creature. The plural terms, " us " and " our," in the above quotation from the first of Genesis, have attracted the attention of all who have read the Scriptures ; and various have been the interpretations. That these terms have a direct reference to " the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ," is evident. It is clear, I think, that they involve one and the self-same truth with the words of our Lord, " Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words : and My Father will love him, and *We* will come unto him, and make *Our* abode with him " (John 14, 23).

Whatever may be said of the similitude, which the intellectual nature of man bears to the nature of God, there is no doubt that the image in which Adam was formed, was given him as that, in which " the last Adam," the Son of God, should appear on the earth. The Son of God is the Word, which in the beginning " was with God and was God," " made flesh : "—the Word, the Divine, the eternal nature ;—the flesh, the human nature, born of a woman in the fulness of time. But the Son of God is not to be viewed

as a draught after the form of the first Adam, although His human progeniture is traced up to the first link in the series of human generations. Adam was not the prototype from which Christ was copied, but Christ was the prototype from which Adam was copied. The Son of God—and when I use this title, I always have in view the Word made flesh—“ was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” (Prov. 8, 23). He “ is the first-born of every creature ” ;—“ before all things, and by Him all things consist ” (Co. 1, 15, 17). Christ was always present with Him who inhabits eternity ;—present in the mind of the Eternal God, when He said, “ Let us make man in our image,” as much as when He spoke from heaven to Jesus after His baptism, saying, “ Thou art my beloved Son ; in Thee I am well pleased.”

To Christ, then, in the purpose of the Father, must be attributed the priority over all, as He is the First-born among many brethren, and He must not be viewed as a secondary object. He is, nevertheless, as to His actual appearing in the flesh, “ the Son of man ; ” and “ He was made in the likeness of men.” “ Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same.” “ Therefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren.” (Heb. 2, 14, 17). Now, when it is said, “ For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, ” the Son is viewed in His manhood, as the “ Word made flesh.” For it was not His abstract divine nature alone, to which the many brethren were predestinated to be conformed ; as it is not His abstract divine nature alone, to which they stand in the relation of brethren, but to His entire character as the Son of God, in which He is the “ Word made flesh,” and the “ only begotten of the Father.” He was, therefore, made like unto His brethren, that they might ultimately be made like unto Him, according to the eternal purpose of the Father. And the formation of the natural man in the image of God, is the beginning of the conformity of the many sons unto the image of the First-born, which is the object of the purpose of the God of love, according to the doctrine of our text.

2. Another step in the work of conforming the many brethren unto the image of the Son of God, is their regeneration. It is by regeneration that they are brought into the relationship to the Son, in which they are here represented ;—“ the First-born among many brethren.” “ Son,” “ Firstborn,” and “ brethren,” are correlative terms ; for the “ many brethren,” are children of the same Father of whom Christ is the Son. “ For ye are all the

children of God by faith, in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3, 26). And the "many brethren" of the First-born, are, in another Scripture, called "many sons," whom God is "bringing unto glory" (Heb. 2, 10). The evangelist John, in the first chapter of his gospel, has connected in one view, "the sons of God," who become such by faith in Christ, and by being born of God, and "the only begotten of the Father," who is "the Word made flesh." "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Now, we cannot doubt that John intended, in this connection, to show the relationship between those who are sons of God, by being born of God, and "the Word made flesh," which is "the only begotten of the Father;" and *that* just the relationship which we observe in our text, between the "Son," the "First-born," and the "many brethren." And through regeneration believers enter into this relationship to the Son of God, they being thereby made joint-partakers of the same natures with Him. The Word being made flesh, He took on Him, "not the nature of angels" but "the seed of Abraham"—the same flesh and blood of which the children are partakers; (Heb. 2, 14, 16). and they being born of the Spirit, partake of His Spirit. "And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (John 1, 16). Christ partook of the human nature of the children, and He communicates unto them His divine nature, by which they are born of God, become the sons of God, and brethren of the First-born.

But the relationship between the Son of God, and those who are the children of God by faith in His name does not confound His character with theirs, even though they are called *sons* of God. Both He and they possess the same natures, human and divine; and both are necessary to constitute son-ship, in Him and them. But the divine nature of the Son of God, is His primary and original nature, essential and eternal. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." When He was born of a woman, the Word was made flesh, and He took the human nature into union with the divine. The reverse of this we have to state, in describing the character of the children of God. Their first nature is human. They are born of the flesh, and are flesh; and in this state they are simply the creatures of God. Being born again, they receive a spiritual nature—the Holy Spirit—"that

eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1, 2). Nor is this all the difference, great as it is, between the Son of God and the many brethren. The Father "giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him" (John 3, 34). "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2, 9). But unto every one of those who are born of God, "is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." Although they are said to be born of God, Christ is distinguished as the only *begotten Son of God*; for He is the Son of the Father in a character perfectly unique, and exclusively His own. He is the Son who inherits all His Father's titles, the fulness of His Father's nature, and the perfection of His Father's attributes. Yet He is not "ashamed," notwithstanding the high elevation of His character above that of His disciples, "to call them brethren." He recognised them in this relation in the message He sent to them by Mary, after His resurrection: "I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20, 17).

Into this relationship to Christ the First-born, the people of God enter by being born again; and by this the Holy Spirit puts upon them the image of the Son of God. They are in degree endued with the same qualities of love, meekness, obedience to the Father's will, and zeal for the Father's glory, which shone forth so brightly in Him. "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is so are we in this world" (1 John 4, 17). Born of the Spirit, they are righteous, as He is righteous. They receive His spirit, and with it His image, His life, His joy. For, while we find our image as sinners by our contrast to the holy Law of God; as it relates to the Gospel, we must find our image as the children of God, by our conformity to His Son.

3. The many brethren are conformed to the image of the Son, by their growth in grace, as they continue to be filled with His Spirit. Those who are born again, bear, in the development of the life of faith, a similitude to natural childhood. "As newborn babes, they desire the sincere milk of the Word that they may grow thereby." We find that the apostle John, addressing the followers of Christ, distinguished them into the three classes, of "little children," "young men," and "fathers," according to the degrees of their attainments in the knowledge of God, and of their conformity to the image of His Son. The human nature of Jesus grew. In infancy He manifested infant faculties of mind, as well

as infant stature of body ; and He grew both “ in wisdom and in stature.” But when once the temple of His body was prepared, it is impossible for us to take cognizance of any degrees by which that temple was filled with the Divine Nature. When He comes forth to view after His baptism, He comes forth complete. There is no further progression of character in Him, as there is in His followers, except in His resurrection from the dead, and His ascension to the throne. They never receive the Spirit “ without measure ” as He did ; and they never receive the measure of the Spirit which God gives them, all at once. “ And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace ” (John 1, 16). “ But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ” (2 Cor. 3, 18). We read of the beginning and the finishing of the work of God in the souls of His people. “ Being confident of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform *it* until the day of Jesus Christ ” (Phil. 1, 6). And through the communication of His Spirit, the children of God grow in conformity to the image of His Son :—in the knowledge of the Father, in the intensity of their love, in the spirituality of their minds. The soul after being born again, arrives at perfection by a spiritual and gradual process, of instruction, of discipline, and of sanctification by the Holy Spirit ;—the body will be perfected in the resurrection by one stroke of infinite power, “ in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.” Hence the renewal of the soul, by regeneration, is effected before the renewal of the body, by the resurrection of the dead.

4. They will be conformed to the image of the Son of God, by the resurrection, when their bodies will be fashioned like unto His glorious body. “ For our conversation is in heaven ; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ : Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself ” (Phil. 3, 20, 21). Whatever the glorified humanity of Christ is, which, however, we do not know, the same, in the resurrection, will be that of the people whom He has redeemed with His own blood. This is the view of the heavenly glory which is given in the Scriptures, since Christ ascended to the throne ; and this is the hope of all who believe in Him, founded upon the testimony and promise of God. “ Beloved, now are we the Sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be : but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him ; for we

shall see Him as He is." (1 John 3, 2). This conformity to the image of the Son of God, in His heavenly glory, is affirmed by the apostle Paul in his doctrine of the resurrection. "And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly (1 Cor. 15, 49).

The exaltation of the saints in the image, and to the glorious state, of Christ, is a wonderful discovery of the love of God. In it we contemplate infinite love, having infinite power and resources, gratifying itself in exalting its objects to the highest imaginable felicity. Love delights to confer happiness; and when love so great as the love of God, has equal resources at command, the happiness it confers knows no bounds. The thought, that God exalts the creature man, from a state of sin, degradation, and misery, to the throne of glory on which Christ has sat down, is well nigh confounding. If this glory had not been plainly revealed, and firmly promised, by the words of God, such a thought could not have entered our minds; presumption itself could never have entertained the hope of so glorious a transformation. But since God has promised this glory, and enlightened the eyes of His people's understanding to know it, it is not presumption to hope for its full fruition. Now the revelation is made, reason does not revolt against the doctrine. For if it is once admitted that the love of God is infinite, and that His riches in glory are equal to His love, we are prepared to expect that the felicity bestowed on the children of God, is unmeasurable in degree, as well as eternal in duration. And this felicity is in being conformed to the image of His Son. God spared not His own Son, when the giving of Him up was to ignominy, agony, and the death of the Cross. Here were obstacles in the way of the gift. The God of love surrendered the object of His delight, to be a whole burnt-offering upon the altar, to redeem the guilty transgressors of His law. But now the sufferings of Christ are all over, and He has entered into His glory. How, then, shall not God "with Him also freely give us all things," when the gift is the gratification of His own infinite love, without repeating the suffering in the garden, and the death on the cross? "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? (Romans 8, 32).

Although all the saints will, in the end, be conformed to the image of the Son of God, (and, whatever is said about degrees in glory, no one will come short of this image, and no one can go

beyond), yet Christ will, as the First-born, ever have the pre-eminence. He will never be confounded with the many brethren. It can never be said of any one of them ; “ In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” “ The Father giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.” His glorified manhood, and not His infinite Godhead, is the exemplar of the glory of the saints.

And He will be the First-born among *many* brethren ; even “ a great multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues ” (Rev. 7, 9). Having “ delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father ; ” and having “ put down all rule, and all authority and power,” by which the delivered up kingdom shall have been opposed, He will not exercise the same kingly authority He now does, but will have a fraternal presidency over the many brethren, of which He is the First-born.

Conformity to the image of the Son, is nothing short of the full transformation of the soul and body of His people, to His image and glory. It includes the lower degree of conformity in regeneration and sanctification of the Spirit ; but it comes not short of the higher. Neither a carnal mind nor a fleshy body, will ever enter the kingdom of God. The Holy Spirit, by regeneration and sanctification, creates the spiritual mind ; and the same Spirit, by the resurrection of the dead, brings forth the spiritual body. Those who consider conformity to the image of the Son of God, the cause, and not the object, of the purpose of God, take care to place the standard low enough for imitation. But, in the text, Christ, to whose image the saints will be conformed, is viewed in the height of His glory ; and their conformity to His image will be complete at the end of the world ;— it is not so at the beginning of their faith. The apostle evidently arrives at the same thing, as conformity to the image of the Son, when, in verse 30, for the purpose of noticing some of the links between predestination and its ultimate object, he says ; “ Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified ; and whom He justified, them He also *glorified*.”

II. We now consider the purpose of God with regard to this object. “ For whom He did foreknow them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.”

The Son of God is here viewed in the human nature ; for to Him in this nature are believers related, as His brethren. “ Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto

His brethren." He took upon Him their likeness, and was glorified in their nature, and thus became the "image" unto which all the elect of God will be conformed. The first lines of His character are drawn on them, by the Holy Spirit in regeneration; and, "speaking the truth in love," they afterwards "grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." (Eph. 4, 15). So long, however, as the renewed mind is connected with an unrenewed body, the conformity of the saints to the image of the Son, is not complete. Nor will Christ be the first-born among the many brethren, who constitute the "whole family" of God, until the successive generations of time shall arrive at the end, the mystery of God be finished, and the saying go forth, "It is done." Then will all the brethren, without one exception, be complete in the image of the Son of God, and He will be the First-born among them.

No one, who knows the Scriptures, can doubt that the glorification of the Son of God, was the object of God's eternal purpose. In the days of His flesh He prayed; "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17, 5). Now, it was not the purpose of the Father, that Christ should be solitary and alone in His glorified state, but that he should be the First-born among many brethren. To fulfil this purpose, to unite them with Himself, He was made obedient unto death. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (John 12, 24). If Christ had not died, such was the condition of all by sin, He would have been "alone," would have had no companionship on the throne, and in the glory of His Kingdom. After praying for His own glorification, He prayed for that of those whom the Father had given to Him. "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which Thou hast given me: for Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world" (John 17, 24). And this prayer was in accordance with the purpose of God, spoken of in our text. Nor did the Lord pray that His disciples should be mere spectators of His glory, but sharers of it; for in verse 22, He says; "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one."

I have thus taken pains to place before you the true nature of conformity to the image of the Son of God, as the object of God's eternal purpose of love towards His chosen people; because I think

the knowledge of this essential to the right understanding of the nature of that purpose, and of its bearing upon other important truth of Divine Revelation. I do not intend this to be understood as the only object which God had before Him, in choosing His people to be joint-heirs with Christ in the glory of His kingdom ; for the apostle, in another place, expressly states, that “ the praise of the glory of His grace,” as well as “ the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself,” was included in His grand design ” (Eph. 1, 5, 6). And here the glory of the grace of God shines, in connection with the felicity of Saints ; for whether we contemplate the eminence of the title and felicity which God confers upon them, or their unworthiness upon whom the title and felicity are conferred, the riches of His grace and love excite equal admiration and praise : “ Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God ” (John 3, 1).

We shall now endeavour to determine the signification of the two terms of the text, by which the apostle sets forth “ the purpose of God according to election ; ”—“ foreknow,” and “ predestinate.” The word “ foreknow,” signifies more than God’s simple prescience of future events ;—more than to fore-see the future existence of things. The original language has a word which expresses simple foresight (Acts 2, 31 ; Gal. 3, 8) ; but this word the apostle did not use in the text. In the sense of simple prescience, God foreknew all things ; but the expression “ *whom* he did fore-know,” implies a limitation in the objects of knowledge. The word “ know,” without the particle “ fore ” prefixed, is often used to express knowledge with approbation ; or, to acknowledge in a certain relation. “ And Moses said unto the Lord, See, thou sayest unto me, bring up this people ; and Thou hast not let me know whom Thou wilt send with me. Yet Thou hast said, I *know* thee by name, and Thou hast also *found* grace in My sight.” “ And the Lord said unto Moses, I will do this thing also that thou hast spoken : for thou hast *found* grace in My sight, and I *know* thee by name ” (Ex. 33, 12, 17). The Lord said unto Israel, “ You only have I *known* of all the families of the earth ” (Amos 3, 2). Again it is written ; “ For the Lord *knoweth* the way of the righteous.” In the seventh chapter of the epistle to the Romans, verse 15, the word rendered “ allow,”—“ for that which I do I *allow* not,”—is the same word, without the prefixed particle, as that in the text, which we have under consideration. “ Whom He did fore-know,” therefore, signifies, whom He did foreacknowledge as standing

in a peculiar relationship to Himself. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1, 2). And in the 20th verse of this chapter, the apostle speaks of Christ as the object of the fore-knowledge of God: "Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world." The word here rendered "foreordained," is the same as that rendered "did foreknow" in the text. And "foreknowledge" in the second verse, is the same in the form of a noun.

To predestinate is to determine the end before it takes place. The word predestinate, 1 Cor. 2, 7, is translated "ordained before." "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The term expresses the good pleasure of the will of God, which, before the foundation of the world, determined that His chosen sons should be glorified together with the Firstborn. "According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1, 4, 5, 11).

The two words, "foreknow," and "predestinate," in the sense that has been given, may be further explained by the language which the Most High addressed unto the prophet Jeremiah: "*Before* I formed thee in the belly I *knew* thee; and *before* thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I *ordained* thee a prophet unto the nations" (Jer. 1, 5).

The Scriptures also use the words, to elect, elect, election, in reference to the purpose of God, to glorify the Firstborn and the many brethren together. There is some distinction, however, between those terms, and the word "predestinate" in the text. To elect, is to choose out of a number;—to predestinate, to determine an event before it comes to pass, or to foreordain an end and object to be accomplished. Thus in our text; "whom God did foreknow, them he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son." These two terms, foreknow and predestinate, express what, in verse 28, the apostle calls the "purpose" of God; for those whom God did foreknow are those who are "the called according to His purpose," and for whose good all things, under the management of His providence, "work together."

Thus understanding the two terms of the text, in which the apostle speaks of the eternal purpose of God with regard to the Church, I shall express my thoughts further upon the subject, in the following two or three propositions.

1. The ground or cause of God's eternal purpose according to election, is in Himself, and not in those whom He has chosen. The purpose is strictly sovereign, according to the good pleasure of the will of God, and not according to His foresight of good qualities in those whom He did predestinate, which induced Him to appoint them to a glorious kingdom. I do not know what is the meaning of such words as, "according to the good pleasure of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself, according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1, 5, 9, 11), if they do not mean, that the moving cause of the choice of God, to which these words are attached, was in the will of God Himself, and not in the character of the people of His choice. Conformity to the image of the Son of God, in those whom God did predestinate, could not be what God foresaw, as an inducement for Him to choose them; because this conformity is nothing short of being made like Christ, when we shall see Him as He is; and because there is not, in any one, the least degree of conformity to the image of Christ, before it is made in the soul by the Spirit of God in regeneration. God could not foresee, what in fact has never had, and never will have, any existence—a ground of preference in the previous character of those who believe in Christ, above what there is in the character of those who do not believe. It is true that God foresaw the conformity of His people to His only begotten Son; but He foresaw this as the work of His own grace; and, therefore, not as the cause, but as the end and object of His purpose. The apostle included the Ephesians with himself and the Jewish believers, in the purpose of God, when he wrote the following words: "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love" (Eph. 1, 4). Did God foresee holiness, or any degree of it, or any approximation towards it, in the previous character of either the Ephesians or the apostle Paul, as the moving cause of His choosing them in Christ before the foundation of the world? Or, was it the object of His purpose, that they "should be holy and without blame before Him in love?" What does the apostle say concerning the previous character of those chosen vessels? "And you hath He quickened, who were dead in trespasses and

sins, wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of dis-obedience. Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind ; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others " (Eph. 2, 1, 3). Do you think God foresaw good qualities in such characters as these, as the ground on which He preferred them before others, to be the heirs of the eternal inheritance ? The repenting thief on the cross was a chosen vessel. What was there in him that caused his being such ? Saul of Tarsus was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, and he was called at the moment that, with his heart full of rage against the disciples of the Lord, he was going to Damascus to execute upon them a cruel commission. What was the moving cause of God's choice of him ? Was it the good pleasure of the will of God ? Or, was it some approved quality of mind originating with Saul, and foreseen of the eternal God ?

These are not peculiar cases, to be viewed in the light of exceptions ; they are specimens of the character of the people of God at all times, and in all countries. Those who will, in the end, be conformed to the image of the Son of God, have in their time gone as far from God as others that perish in their sins ; and when the Gospel of Christ was preached unto both alike, the former were not more predisposed than the latter, to receive it into their hearts, and to return to God. God could not, therefore, foresee any good disposition in any of us who believe, as the cause for which he chose us in eternity, and called us in time ; for, in fact, there was not any such disposition in us. And if we know ourselves as we ought, we shall not be backward to confess, that the cause of our election is not to be sought for in ourselves, but in the good pleasure of the will of God, " who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began " (2 Tim. 1, 9) If conformity to the image of the Son, in the text, is to be viewed as consisting in humility, piety, holiness, etc., foreseen by God in the people of His choice, and presenting the motive and cause of His foreordaining them to eternal life, how would this agree with the words that follow, in which the apostle notices some of the things that intervene between predestination and its object—glorification ? " More-
over whom he did predestinate, them He also called : and whom He called, them He also justified : and whom He justified, them He

also glorified." Are not the calling and the justification of the many brethren both of God? And do not both, as consequences, proceed from their being predestinated? I think the affirmative of both these questions is the truth.

Besides, I do not see what is gained, in the attempt to remove a stumbling-block out of the way of the weak, by stating that the choice of God in foreordaining some to eternal life, was guided by His foresight of good dispositions in the chosen, and of evil ones in the rest. On this view of the subject I might object,—“If God foresaw that I should continue in my impenitence and unbelief, die in my sins, and finally and eternally be an outcast from Him, such will certainly be my lot.” It is in vain to bring forward the infinite prescience of Jehovah, to clear up the mystery of His will, in the election of His people; for His prescience itself involves a mystery which neither men nor angels can explain, so as to bring it within the compass of our reason. But we must not determine what is the truth upon this important doctrine, according to our judgment of what is the more expedient for the Most High God to do. We can, indeed, decide that it is impossible for Him to do anything contradictory to His acknowledged perfections of justice, goodness, and truth; for it is as impossible for God to do a thing which is unjust, as it is for him “to lie.” But when we consider that “His way is in the sea, His path in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known,” we shall not judge of the truth concerning His eternal purpose, by our ideas of what is fit and expedient for Him to do. Let those who feel inclined to do this, give ear to those awful interrogatories which the Most High uttered out of the whirlwind to His servant Job. To borrow a little from the imagination of another, imagine an insect gifted with some small spark of intelligence, and that insect to set itself to judge of the measures of our first minister of state, according to its perception of expediency and fitness; would this insect, on this principle, form a correct judgment on the ways of so highly intellectual a being? And yet the disparity between the insect and the minister would not be so great, as that between us and the eternal God. I do not, in speaking thus, seek, like an Oxford Tract writer, to overawe you into the belief of an absurdity, but to persuade you off from the ground of expediency, as an unsafe ground on which to view the purpose of God; and to induce in you a mind sympathetic with that of the apostle Paul, in the words with which he concludes the mighty subject he introduces in our text. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how

unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out ! For who hath known the mind of the Lord ! or who hath been His counsellor ? Or who hath first given to Him and it shall be recompenced unto Him again ? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen."

The purpose of God, according to election, is not a consequence of His foresight of sin, nor did it in any way render sin necessary. It was capable of being carried into effect without the existence of sin at all. How difficult soever the conception of a pure contingency, under the rule of the universal and Almighty governor of the world, I can come to no other conclusion on this head, than that sin is a *contingency*. It was not rendered necessary by the direct decree of God ; for no man can find in the Scriptures such a doctrine as that God decreed sin. If God had decreed sin from eternity, His forbidding it by a Law, after He made man, was the grossest inconsistency and insincerity any being could be guilty of. Nor did God permit sin, in the sense of allowing or consenting to its commission ; for the same objection lies against this, as against a positive decree that it should exist. God gave a prohibitory law at first, and a more ample law afterwards, in which He forbade man to sin, on pain of death. And this demonstrates the truth, that He did neither decree sin, nor consent to its introduction. God immutably, and universally, loves righteousness, and hates iniquity ; and he who confesses this, and yet believes that God decreed sin, consented to it, or in any way rendered it necessary, takes a most monstrous view of the Divine character. And he who says he loves God, and lauds the excellency of His name, while he believes that God decreed, or rendered necessary the sin which exists in this world, with all its consequent misery in time and in eternity, either dissembles, or is grossly self-deceived.

Sin did not necessarily grow out of the constitution which God had given to any being in the creation ; for after He had made all, He saw that all were, not only good, but, " very good." Man in the progress of his works, improves upon his first attempts ; but God made all things perfect in the first essay ;—so good, that infinite wisdom could suggest no improvement ; and so complete, as to admit of nothing new. I think it impossible, satisfactorily, to answer the question propounded to the house of Israel, and which with strict propriety we may modify to apply to the creation, viz. ; wherefore, when the Creator looked that the choice vine He had planted in the vineyard of creation should bring forth grapes,

brought it forth wild grapes ? (Isaiah 5, 4). But this must, I think, be admitted, that the first evil being that existed, and that was not Adam, must have degenerated from a pure created nature, to an evil and a corrupt nature, by a wrong use of his own free faculties, without bias from any evil agency. I confess that my thoughts here involuntarily wander back to the origin of evil without a scripture conductor, and I express myself with considerable diffidence ; but I cannot suppress in my own mind the thought I have given utterance to. I do not, however, feel any diffidence in giving utterance to the sentiment, that sin was not rendered necessary by reason of the constitution God gave to any being in the creation ; for He made nothing with a fault. I do not venture into the subject of God's prescience, for fear of raising questions which the Scriptures do not anticipate and answer, and for fear of wading beyond my depth ; but this I know from the Scriptures, that God sometimes, when He looks down from the height of His sanctuary upon the ways of the children of men, gives utterance to expressions of grief and disappointment, as one who looks for good fruit from a tree which he has planted, and which brings forth wild grapes (Gen. 4, 5, 6, 7). And the least that can be said of these mysterious words is, that He neither knowingly nor unwittingly rendered sin necessary ; for He is a being of infinite perfection, without obliquity of will, without error or limit in understanding.

Sin is not rendered necessary in order to give occasion for the display of the glory of God. I have been grieved to find the doctrine affirming what I here deny, where I did not expect to find it. It is true that God makes the wrath of man—the impetuosity of the human passions—to praise Him. But there is a difference between overruling an evil in existence, to subserve the glory of God, and requiring its very existence for this purpose. God would not have been at a loss for occasions to display His glory, if the sin, and misery, and death, of man had never existed. I cannot understand the doctrine, that omnipotence cannot demonstrate itself to be omnipotence, without the opposition of the antagonistic agents that sin has brought into existence. Had not Adam, on the first day of his existence in the new-made world, as full a display of the glory of God, as any that sin could give occasion for ? Or, had God, when he had created and marshalled these works, exhausted all His means of manifesting His glory to angels and men, without the production of fresh occasions by the working of sin ? The work of salvation, it is true, in all its branches, manifests

the glory of God, beyond all blessing and praise ; but this is a negative work ; and I can conceive of occasions for the display of the glory of God, after He had created the heaven and the earth,—in the economy of His government over all, in developing intellectual nature, in the provision of the positive glories of the kingdom of heaven, and in raising the sons of the first Adam unto the image of the last,—amply sufficient, without the wickedness of devils and men, and the pains of eternal torments. This may be considered useless speculation ; but give up your fearful sentiment, that sin is necessary to display the glory of God, and we will give up all such speculation as this.

The purpose of God is not according to His foresight of sin, and it did not require that sin should be, for the accomplishment of its object and end. Sin is a dreadful evil in its character and consequences in this world ; and all its results will not be known before those unhappy beings, who will be found in their sins at the judgment of the last day, will be exiles from light, and life, and peace. Surely a Being of infinite perfection was capable of forming and executing His purpose, without all the sin and misery that exist in this world, and in the state of sinners in the world to come. We have observed, that in order to the right understanding of the nature of God's eternal purpose, it is necessary to keep in view the object which God purposed to effect ;—the conformity of His chosen people to the image of His Son ; that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. And again ; “ having predestined us *unto the adoption of children* by Jesus Christ unto Himself.” This purpose was capable of being carried into complete effect, without the intervention of sin, and without the existence of one miserable being among all the human family. Adam when he was first created, was not in the image of the Son of God, in the sense in which those whom God foreknew, were predestinated to be conformed thereunto ; just as Adam in paradise was not like the Son of God upon the throne of His glory. Adam's body, when he was first made, was but a natural body,—flesh and blood,—which could never inherit the kingdom of God ; but conformity to the image of the Son of God, is in a spiritual body ; the most we know of which is, that it is not material flesh and blood. Nor did the glory of God, working a transformation of soul, fill the intellectual faculties of Adam in paradise, as it will those of the saints, when they will be conformed to the image of the Son of God. Nor was the natural life of Adam in paradise, of the same nature as the eternal life of the saints, which they will enjoy when they attain unto the

object of God's purpose of love. Adam was made capable of living for ever ; but he did not, it is clear, possess that absolute immortality which is incapable of death, and which will be put upon the sons of God, in the kingdom of their Father. All this is made very plain by the words of the apostle (1 Cor. 15, 44-50). " It is sown a natural body ; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul ; the last Adam was a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy : the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy : and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God ; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."

It was not necessary that Adam, in order that he should be conformed to the image of the Son of God, according to the eternal purpose of God, should first forfeit the favour, and incur the displeasure of his Maker, by falling into sin, any more than it is necessary to first degrade one whom you intend to exalt : and neither reason nor Scripture requires us to conclude, that God's purpose to conform His saints, who should be created in the image of the first Adam, unto the image of the last Adam, required sin for its auxiliary, or was in any way dependent on a mischief so dreadful. It is not strictly proper to speak of succession in the thoughts of an infinite and eternal Being ; but we must not conceive of God first foreseeing the sin of the world He would create, and then determining upon sending His Son into the world, to redeem those whom He chose to be saved. The tenor of the language of the Scriptures on this subject is this. Christ was set up in the purpose of God in eternal priority. He is the head ; and the many brethren were chosen in Him and for Him ; that, glorified together, He might be the first-born among them. And all the people of God were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, on the same ground as that on which Christ was chosen—the love of the Father. For in His prayer to the Father He first affirms, at least His words imply the affirmation, that " thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me ; " and then, " thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world " (John 17, 23, 24). And when the many sons of God shall " shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father," and when He

who is the beginning of the creation of God shall have carried into complete effect the glorious purpose of the Father's love, they will not feel that they owe their unmeasurable felicity to sin, but to God and the Lamb, in defiance of sin. "Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ," will be uttered with loud acclaim from countless millions before the throne of God. Not one of them will ever thank God, as one of our most eloquent writers has done, or affects to do, that He was born a sinner,—like a rebel insulting his sovereign with thanking him that he has trodden underfoot his laws. For as, through the supremacy of Him who worketh all things after the council of His own will, who says, "my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," sin will not diminish aught from the felicity of those who are joint-heirs with Christ, so neither will sin in any degree augment their felicity in the world to come. When they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world, they will, in all respects, stand precisely upon the same footing as they would have stood on, had there been no sin nor death at all.

When this light of the eternal purpose of God first entered into my soul, more than thirty years ago, it elated my heart above measure. Nothing but the mercy of God, through Christ, in the remission of sins, gave me so much joy as the view I was enabled to take of the character of God, when I saw His purpose, to glorify the objects of His love, disentangled from sin; and when I saw that the works of the devil were not necessary to make the works of the Lord "honourable and glorious." From that day to this I have neither felt the suspicion, nor insinuated it into the mind of a fellow creature, that the Most High God condemns His creatures to everlasting fire, for that without which He could not work out His own purpose, and which He had directly or indirectly made necessary. What I have here written, and what I may hereafter write, on this doctrine, is not with me a matter of speculation. It has to do with my confidence in God, my love of God,—with all heavenly consolation my soul knows, and with every word of adoration and praise I give utterance to, when I approach to worship His "glorious and fearful name." Distort my views of the character of my Creator, give me to suspect that, notwithstanding His awful denunciations against sin, He has some latent will which cannot be done without it, and then, where is my confidence in Him, my love, my admiration of the excellency of His name!

III. The special love of God for His chosen people is connected in the Scriptures with His universal love for all mankind. Every

doctrine relative to divine truth must be founded upon a fair grammatical interpretation of the words of Scripture; and it is requested that this part of the doctrine advanced be tested by this principle, and not by that of logical harmony between the special and the universal love of God. By logical harmony is meant, harmony that you can adequately reason out. It is constantly objected that these two branches of doctrine always clash, and that you cannot harmonise the one with the other. And if we cannot, what then? This does not prove that both are not true, A mite at one angle of a stupendous fabric, might as well object, that it cannot see the harmonious proportions of the whole. Truth, upon so vast a matter as the character and ways of God, does not depend upon your ability to reason out the harmony of all its parts. You make the best use of your reason in the pursuit of truth, when you use it, in imitation of the noble Bereans, to "search the Scriptures daily whether those things are so." If you attempt to square either of these branches of truth, which we affirm stand side by side in the Holy Scriptures, to harmonise it with the other, according to the analogy of a one-sided faith, you will surely bring out an idol; for the character of God, is essentially connected with the doctrine that now occupies our attention.

It is very common for persons to be distinguished in the Christian community by their faith in one of these two branches of doctrine, and their disbelief of the other. Those who adhere to the one view, and reject the other, usually erect in their mind a standard of faith, according to the view they take, and interpret all those words of Scripture, relative to the other branch of doctrine, so as to make them harmonise with the standard they have erected. This has sometimes, in allusion to Romans 12, 6, been called prophesying according to the analogy of faith. Thus, for instance, one person, who has only the one idea, that God loves His chosen people, and gave His Son to die for their redemption, according to an eternal covenant of election, interprets the words, "God so loved the world,"—God so loved the elect of all nations; and the words, God "will have all men to be saved;" the man Christ Jesus "gave Himself a ransom for all"—to signify, God will have all the elect to be saved, and Jesus gave Himself a ransom for all the elect. And this is keeping up a consistency of interpretation throughout, and making one part of Scripture agree exactly with the other; at least in the esteem of such an interpreter. Another is distinguished by his belief that God loves all men alike; that Christ gave Himself equally and in the same sense for all; and

that the difference between the righteous and the wicked is to be accounted for, not from any special grace given to the one more than the other, but from the fact that the one makes a better use and improvement of grace, given alike to all. This person also has in his mind a standard of faith, in harmony with which he interprets those words of the Scriptures, which teach the doctrine that believers in Christ are predestinated unto the adoption of children. According to his view, God foresaw that they would repent and believe ; and on that ground, appointed them to be His children, and to obtain eternal life. This interpreter harmonises his doctrine with a different standard from that of the other. What with the former is primary, is here made subservient ; and what is here primary, is made subservient with the other. Harmony requires some standard ; and every one who frames his system of doctrine according to the rules of logical harmony, takes his primary principle as the standard to which all things must bend. If we take the Scriptures as teaching the works and ways of God in the words of God, then we must endeavour to understand their truth, not by torturing their language upon one branch of doctrine, to make it harmonise, according to our ideas of harmony, with another on which we lay a greater stress, but by putting a fair grammatical construction upon their words, and sentences, and paragraphs.

If the Scriptures do not teach that God wills the salvation of all men, whether chosen or not, then plain words fail to carry any definite meaning. " I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men ; for kings, and for all that are in authority ; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour ; Who will have all men to " be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth " (1 Tim. 2, 1-4). On what principle of construction can you understand a limitation in the words " all men," in this quotation ? Are all men not all men ? Did Paul exhort Timothy to pray and give thanks for all elect men ? And when he specified some particular orders included in the all, as " kings, and all that are in authority," did he mean elect kings, and all the elect in authority ? Now, " all men " whom God will have to be saved, are as comprehensively all, as all men for whom Timothy was exhorted to pray ; if not, the will of God that all men should be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth, would be no reason why all men should be prayed for. For

the reason given why all men are to be prayed for is, that the prayer is agreeable to the will of God, and acceptable to Him on that account, because he wills the salvation of all. It is in vain to urge against this construction the old objection, that if God willed all to be saved, all would be saved. We shall consider this objection presently. With the same latitude we must understand the word "all," in the apostle's statement, which immediately follows the above quotation: "For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time." This is given as an additional reason why prayers and giving of thanks should be made for all men. The first reason is, that God wills that all men should be saved; the second, that Jesus Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. And the word "all" has the same latitude of signification in its connection with prayer and thanksgiving, the will of God, and the ransom which Christ gave. If the apostle did not mean that "prayers, intercession, and giving of thanks," should be made for the elect only, then he did not mean that it was the will of God the elect only should be saved nor that for the elect only Christ gave Himself a ransom. The apostle Peter evidently had the same view of the universal benevolence of God, when he wrote the following words: "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3, 9).

The Lord Jesus, after He had given Himself a ransom for all, and taken again the life He had laid down, gave commandment unto His apostles, saying; "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16, 15, 16). But if the death of Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, was restricted to an elect number, and it was the will of God that these only should be saved, it is difficult to see what constituted the Gospel which the Lord commanded to be preached, not only among all nations, but unto every creature. Accordingly, we find, in the specimens of the preaching of the apostles, given us in the Acts, that they, without hesitation, preached the Gospel unto every creature, with a full conviction of the possibility of the salvation of all mankind, whether they preached unto few or many, and without knowing whether they were elect or non-elect. The apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, said to the men of Israel; "Repent and be baptised every one of you in the name of Jesus."

Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost " (Acts 2, 38). Did the apostle know that the men to whom he addressed this unreserved language, were the elect ? Some may reply, that their being pricked in the heart indicated they were. But so much as this cannot be said of those, to whom the same apostle addressed the words recorded in the next chapter ; (verse 17, 18, 19) ; " And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all His prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." And again (verse 26), " Unto you first God, having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from His iniquities." And unto men, who evidently in the end would not hear him, nor receive the Gospel He preached, but put it far from them, and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, the apostle Paul said ; " Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins " (Acts 13, 38). This, if you read the Acts through, was evidently the tone of the preaching of the apostles unto men in their sins, without any regard to their being elected or not. They made no such reserve in their preaching the gospel, as men now do, who believe that there was no way opened, by the death and resurrection of Christ, for the return of all the guilty race of man to the God of mercy and of love. They had no fear that, in preaching repentance and remission of sins, in the name of Jesus Christ, to every guilty son and daughter of Adam, whom they met with, they should overstep the limits of the atonement, and the mercy and the love of Him who spared not His own Son. They knew nothing about any mental reservation in the God of truth, exhibited in His inviting men to the marriage supper, for whom He had made no provision, and whom He never intended to come. They had not been schooled into the subtilty of a latent will, at variance with one declared. They did not preach the universal law of justice for the condemnation of all, and a limited Gospel of grace, which gave no hope of mercy at all. They did not understand the dreadful attributes of God's justice as infinite, whilst the attribute of His love and mercy are finite. They did not proclaim all the world guilty before God, and shun to declare the way of salvation unto all the guilty world, into which Christ had sent them to preach His Gospel. So they

believed, and so they preached, that God "will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth;" and that Jesus Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."

Creation and the provision which God has made therein for the happiness of all, whose animated nature has any perception of happiness, bear indubitable testimony of the universal benevolence of God the Creator. Although the bitter effects of sin have done much to veil the fact, yet enough is still left to convince the most casual observer, if he will reflect, that He who made this world, and all things that are therein, willed that its living inhabitants should be happy beings. If any unhappy being, dissatisfied with his own state and existence, complains, "Why hast thou made me thus?" that being is not as God made him, nor as God designed him to be. God has adapted external nature to the physical constitution of animals, so as to gratify to the highest degree which they are capable of, the nature He has given to them. He hath planted the cedars of Lebanon, "Where the birds make their nests: as for the stork, the fir trees are her house. The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats; and the rocks for the conies" (Psalm 104, 16, 17, 18). How much better is man, made after the similitude of God, than they. The provision God has made in the world of nature for the lord of the creation, was clearly intended to beautify His gifted nature with superior delights; and from this I come to the following conclusion;—that the works of God in creation and providence, proclaim the universal good will of God towards man, in a language which is perfectly harmonious with that of the Scriptures of His Word. He who wills the happiness of all men, in any period of their being, must, if He is immutable, will their happiness through their whole existence. God cannot will that men should live and be happy beings in the world, and yet will that they should perish and be miserable in the world to come. He is the same. Man's iniquities alone withhold good things from him, and close his heart against the foundation of life, and peace, and joy, which by the Gospel sends forth its streams through the wide world of man's habitation.

If the Scriptures give me the conviction, that the love of God, and that which arose out of it—the death of His Son as a sacrifice for sin—were restricted to an elect number, then I must believe that I am elected, before I can believe that God loves me, and that Christ gave Himself for me. I must believe in my election, before I can believe that I have redemption through

the blood of Christ, even the forgiveness of my sins. And as it is utterly impossible for any to have a well-grounded belief, that he is chosen of God in Christ, before the foundation of the world, before he believes that Christ died for him as a sinner, I do not see how there could be in the world such a character as a believer if the Gospel preached to men, Christ crucified, to be the propitiation for the sins of only a chosen number. When one knows himself to be a transgressor of the law of God, and under its condemnation, he can discover no peculiarity in his character, that can give him confidence to apply to himself those words of the Scriptures, which speak of Christ loving the Church, and giving Himself for it : he feels himself associated with all who have " gone out of the way," among whom " there is none righteous, no not one." And if in this state, in reading the Scriptures, or in hearing the Word preached, he could perceive no love of God but what was restricted to a peculiar people, and no atonement in the death of Christ for all, he would be left in despair. He who addresses you, well remembers the time when the word " whosoever," to be found in the New Testament, was felt to be essential to his faith and hope in God : and if he had never met with such a word in the Bible, he would never have known peace. He has been a minister of the Word thirty years, and has ever felt the great importance of testifying to all men of Christ, that He gave Himself a ransom for all ; and while He is permitted of God publicly to proclaim His Word, he will, with the help of the Lord, do his utmost to call all men to behold " the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

I shall notice some objections frequently made to the doctrine which has been laid down.

The attempt to answer all the objections that may be raised against the statements that have been made on the doctrine of election, and of the universal love of God, would be vain and unprofitable. We shall, therefore, confine ourselves to some that seem the most to require our immediate attention.

1. It is sometimes objected that if God wills all men to be saved, all men will be saved ; for who hath resisted the will of the Almighty ? This objection proceeds upon a false principle, and assumes as its basis what is not true ; namely, that nothing can exist in opposition to the will of God. It may seem quite certain to some, that the will of an omnipotent Being must in all cases be done ; and from this it may appear only logical to conclude, that

if it was the will of God that all should be saved, all would be saved ; which is not the fact : the inference, therefore, is, that it is not the will of God that all should be saved. The Scriptures distinguish between the immutable purpose of God, which He has sworn by the arm of His strength to perform, and the will of God, which is frustrated by the wickedness of men. With regard to the former He says, " My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure ;" with regard to the latter, " O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathered her chickens under her wings, and ye would not !" (Isaiah 44, 10; Matt. 23, 37). Many things exist contrary to the will of God, and one thing is the fearful fact, that all men are not saved. Those who raise this objection, ought, in consistency, to say that nothing, not even the most heinous sin, exists contrary to the will of the Most High. And some, I believe, do go very far towards this awful assertion. No matter that God has uttered His voice in thunder and earthquake against the sin of man, He wills it. " Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in iniquity : " ' yet,' says Dr. Gill, in his comment on these words, " He decreed it." I feel much more respect for those who do not believe in an unconditional and eternal election, for the reason that they cannot separate it from an unconditional and eternal reprobation, than I do for those who dare to say that the God of Holiness wills the existence of sin. The former show a jealousy for the character of God ; but the latter appear to have none. The former, I think, diminish the glory of God ; but the latter heap infamy upon His Holy Name.

2. It is objected, that if Christ died for all, in the full acceptance of the word—" all," then His blood was shed in vain ; for all will not be saved. This argument does not possess much weight ; but there is a class of persons by whom it is frequently urged against the doctrine, that Christ died for all ; and as it is our belief that the Scriptures do plainly teach this doctrine, whilst they establish that of eternal and unconditional election, it seems to be to our purpose to notice the objection, by which we are sometimes assailed. It is admitted, that all will not be saved. The wicked will go away from the judgment seat of Christ into everlasting punishment, which will be their fixed condition without end. But this awful truth does not contradict the Scripture statement, that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all ; and for this reason, that both are stated on the same authority—the New

Testament of Jesus Christ. Christ did not give Himself for all, in the same sense as He gave Himself for the Church, according to the words of the apostle,—“ Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it ; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing ; but that it should be holy and without blemish ” (Eph. 5, 25, 26, 27). Now it is evident from these words, that the Church which Christ loved, and for which He gave Himself, will be presented to Him a glorious Church. But this cannot be said of all, for whom Christ died. But when we turn to the seventh chapter of the Revelation, and there read of “ a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people, and tongues, who have come out of much tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” shall we say that the blood of Christ was shed in vain, because this great multitude does not include all ? The whole race of transgressors of the Law of God did not so augment the guilt of the world, as to require a greater sacrifice for all, than for some ; nor can any one man under the sun say, If there had been no greater offender, or no other offender than myself, so great a sacrifice as the Son of God would not have been required. No greater sacrifice than this can be imagined, no greater price could be given ; but no less is required for one sinner against the living God. It is requisite for one, it is sufficient for all ; and in its final and eternal results, it will redeem from darkness and from death, to the realms of eternal life, the great majority of mankind, who shall have lived and breathed under the sun. Our Lord compared the Gospel invitations to men, to those of a King inviting men to come to the marriage of his son. All would not come who were invited ; but are we to infer from this, that there was not provision for all ? Or, that because all did not come, the provision was made in *vain* ?

So far we have noticed some objections frequently brought against the doctrine of God’s universal love, and of the universal atonement of Christ. But there are those who concur with us in this doctrine, yet object to our statements on the subject of eternal and unconditional election ; and we must, before we conclude pay some attention to objections of this character.

3. One objection frequently raised by those who hold the sentiment we have just advanced on the universal love of God, is, that the doctrine of eternal and unconditional election imputes partiality to the Divine Being. If by partiality is meant,

the exercise of special love and favour, we confess our belief that the Scriptures very plainly impute this to the Most High ; and the imputation does not diminish the glory of His Name. The most benevolent and just men are in the habit of exercising special affections, without being conscious of wrong doing. They can exercise special affections, without using oppression and injustice ; yea, in connection with affectionate good will towards all. And so is the Christian exhorted : “ As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith ” (Gal. 6, 10). Can any person candidly read the Bible, and come to the conclusion, that this holy Book teaches that the Most High has in every age dealt with all nations, and every individual under the sun, exactly alike ; and that from Abraham downwards, He has never shewn one sovereign favour to any individual, which He has not shewn unto all ? I think not. Man exercises special love, and thinks it his honour to do so, but he is unwilling to allow his Maker the same freedom.

Partiality is a corrupt affection when it operates to the perversion of justice ; but this is a very different thing from conferring special favours which none can claim, upon one unworthy object in preference to another. We can defy any one to show, that the Scriptures impute unto God a partiality that perverts justice. His purpose in predestination, leaves the state of those who perish just the same as if there was no such purpose at all. God’s predetermination, to conform some unto the image of His Son, did not cause either them or the rest, to transgress the Law ; and the transgression of the Law of God is the sole cause for which the wicked perish.

If the difference which God makes between one man and another, by His purpose of predestination, is partiality, then is God partial as a Creator. I do not see that God acts upon any different principle in predestination, from that which He acted upon in creating the world. In both, He worketh all things according to the counsel of His own will. It is confessed that God, in the original formation of all things, did not mould all alike, nor place all in the same station. He did not make man an angel ; and it is highly probable that He did not make the angels all of the same rank. Nor in the distributions of His providence, has God allotted the same to all nations, and all individuals. He has not located every nation in an equally favourable part of the earth, nor under the same favourable circumstances ; although it is admitted, that the allotments of human happiness are much nearer

to equality, than the external condition of men might lead us to conclude. What other principle is evolved from the purpose of God stated in our text, than that which was manifest in creation ? God made one being above another ; but He did not make one miserable : and His purpose to conform some to the image of His Son, was consistent with the happiness of all mankind. In creation all were not alike, but all were “ very good.” Diversity did not destroy the harmony of the whole. No jarring element of dissatisfaction arose in the mind of the being that was made a little lower than other beings of superior powers, and occupying superior stations ;—no feeling of envy towards these ;—no disposition to charge the Creator with partiality, and to complain, “ Why hast thou made me thus ? ” And the purpose of God, on which we speak, is no more a ground of complaint to any being in the universe, than His purpose and work in creating the world.

4. Another objection from the same quarter as the former is, that if the Scriptures teach the doctrine of eternal and absolute election, they also teach that of eternal and absolute reprobation ; that the language is as capable of being construed in favour of the latter doctrine, as of the former. We think not. As to the doctrine of eternal and absolute reprobation, which represents the benevolent Creator, decreeing the sin and misery of millions of His creatures, I would it were scouted out of the world, to find its way back again into that satanic brain which gave it birth. Or, one might imagine that some misanthrope, who thought the Lord God altogether such an one as himself, was the father of this abominable dogma.

God, in creating man to dwell upon the face of the earth, did not act like a foolish potter, who, while he should make some vessels for high and honourable purposes, should make others for the purpose of destruction. A potter does make some vessels for the higher uses of a large house, and some for the inferior ; but he makes none for the direct purpose of destruction. God does not condemn the wicked on the principle of sovereignty, but on that of undeviating justice, rendering to every man according to his works. He bestows favours on the undeserving according to His sovereign good pleasure, and according to His eternal purpose of election ;—“ Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ : According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world ” (Eph. 1, 3, 4). But He does not minister judgment on this principle ;—not on the ground of His sovereign pleasure, but on the ground of His justice, according

to the Holy Law He has given, and according to the works of those who have been under Law to Him. Nor does God minister judgment according to an eternal decree, but according to His unalterable nature to do justice, and His immutable love of righteousness, and hatred of iniquity. We nowhere in the Scriptures read of God's eternal purpose to do justice ; because this would imply the possibility of His doing otherwise. And no one will be condemned at the last day, in consequence of His not being predestinated to be conformed to the image of the Son of God. It is no fault of his, that he was not included in God's eternal purpose. When the apostle establishes his doctrine, concerning election, by a reference to the history of Jacob and Esau, he makes it as plain that Esau was not excluded on the ground of his evil works, as that Jacob was not preferred on the ground of his doing good. " For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth " (Romans 9, 11). It was not on the ground of the evil doing of the elder, that he was fore-appointed to an inferior character and station ; as it was not on the ground of the well-doing of the younger, that he was fore-appointed to have the dominion. And let it be noted, that all that was said concerning these children before they were born, was, " The elder shall serve the younger." The words, " Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," were not spoken of the children, they being not yet born ; but of the two nations, Israel and Edom, in the days of the prophet Malachi. And these words refer to the *history* of the dealings of God towards the two nations ; they do not express His purpose of what He would do in the *future*. The effects of the purpose of God may be traced in the history of the two nations. On the ground of God's special love for Israel, He preserved them when in captivity, and delivered them out of it ; but He laid the mountains and the heritage of Edom waste for the dragons of the wilderness (Mal. 1, 2, 3). Israel did not deserve the favour. The Lord wrought for them, that His purpose and promise might stand ; but the Edomites were deserving of the condemnation ; and judgment went forth against them, not by virtue of a previous decree, but according to their works. In the prophecy of Malachi, therefore, the words, " Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," do not declare a previous purpose, but are a matter of history, referring the Israelites to transactions past in the providence of God, to make them know the love of God towards them, of which they were stupidly insensible.

God's eternal purpose is not a purpose of wrath, as well as of love. He loved Christ before the foundation of the world ; and He loved the many brethren as He loved the first-born, and fore-determined that they should be glorified together ; but He did not exclude the rest in wrath ; for both were viewed as unborn children, who have not done either good or evil. The eternal purpose of God is purely a purpose of love, and was not formed in His eternal mind, as much in anger towards some, as it was in love towards others.

And God is as far from exercising His influence over the actions of men to do evil, as He is from fore-determining their destruction. He works in His people " both to will and to do of His good pleasure," but He does not work in any to will and to do evil. He is the author of regeneration and sanctification in those who believe ; but He is not the author of degeneracy in the wicked. When you read of His hardening the heart of Pharaoh in Egypt, and of the Canaanites in the land which He gave to Israel, you must not infer from this, that He makes soft hearts hard ones ; for certainly the hearts of these men were not tender, before God visited them with that hardy infatuation, which made His power known, and led them on to destruction, as " a recompense unto them." God takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh ; but He never takes away a heart of flesh, to give a heart of stone.

How then can it be said that the Scriptures, if they teach eternal and unconditional election, teach eternal and unconditional reprobation also ? The language which our Lord Jesus Christ, at the last day, will address unto the righteous, and that which He will address unto the wicked, contradict the assertion. " Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." " Then shall He also say unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels " (Matt. 25, 34, 41). Does this language as plainly teach, that the state of torment was prepared for the wicked before they had a being, as that the kingdom of the Father was prepared for the righteous before they had a being ? The language in the two verses is not parallel. You do not read in the latter verse, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for you from the foundation of the world ;" which language would have been parallel with that of the thirty-fourth verse. Nor does our Lord speak of the everlasting fire, by which he sets forth the dreadful state of the condemned, as

being prepared before the existence of sinners. Sin commenced with the devil and his angels, and for them the everlasting fire, which in the end will be the lot of the wicked, was prepared. Again, in the ninth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, when the apostle sums up the doctrine of election, which he had laid down by historical references to the Old Testament, he says, "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom He hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9, 22, 23 24). Can we say in the face of this language, that it teaches a pre-determination in God to punish the wicked, as plainly and as strongly as it teaches His pre-determination to glorify the righteous? The language in reference to the vessels of wrath is not parallel, in this respect, with that in reference to the vessels of mercy. It is not said, in verse 22, that God endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath, which he had *afore prepared unto destruction*; but it is said of the vessels of mercy, "which he had *afore prepared unto glory*." Of the vessels of wrath, the apostle says no more, than that they are "fitted to destruction." He does not say that God fitted them to destruction, as he said of the vessels of mercy, God afore prepared them unto glory. The apostle chose his terms here with great nicety; and that I do not doubt, purposely to avoid the construction that has sometimes been put upon his words; namely, that if he teaches eternal and unconditional election, he teaches the same kind of reprobation. The word rendered "fitted," in verse 22, is from a form of the verb, in, what is called by the Greek grammarians, the middle voice, in which the person is both the agent that performs the action, and the object that receives it. Or, as a grammarian says, "the middle voice serves to signify what we do to ourselves; or what others do to us agreeably to our consent or desire." And thus are the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction. They have fitted themselves to destruction; but the vessels of mercy do not afore prepare themselves unto glory. Why should God endure with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath, if he had predetermined their destruction? It is, however, frequently confessed, that the doctrine of eternal reprobation is to be abhorred; and the plea, that if the Scriptures teach the doctrine of eternal and unconditional election, they also teach that of eternal reprobation, is with the motive of bringing the former into discredit; which is

not very ingenuous. That special love for one must necessarily be connected with hatred and oppression towards another, is not good reasoning ; and that the Scriptures contain language equally strong and conclusive, for an eternal purpose to punish the wicked, as for an eternal purpose to glorify the righteous, is not true. By associating the doctrine of God's purpose, according to the election of grace, with that of the decree of sin and its punishment, many, who view things of this kind through the medium of representations made by others, have started with alarm at the very mention of the word election. If any of you, from such an association in your own habits of thought, have stumbled at the doctrine contained in our text, I shall feel glad if I have in any degree contributed to the breaking asunder of so unnatural, and unscriptural an association, and to the removing of the stumbling-block occasioned by it out of your way.

I shall conclude by offering a few words of exhortation, and

I. To those who are enquiring to know the way of God's salvation by Christ. We are too often found with our eyes turned upward to discover a path hidden in the clouds, while we are inattentive to a highway, made plain and brought near to our feet. Let me entreat those of you who have not known the way of peace, in the remission of your sins, and your justification by faith in Christ Jesus, to look for that way in the gospel preached to every creature. The condemnation which the Law you have broken pronounces, is not more extensive, than the mercy of God made manifest in the cross of Christ, now preached unto the whole world. The barriers in the way of your entering into His rest, are not in the decrees of God, but in your own sins and unbelief. When the apostle, towards the conclusion of the chapter in which he treats largely on the purpose of God in election, asks wherefore it was, that " Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness," he answers, " Because they sought it not by faith " (Romans 9, 31, 32). And unbelief, connected with the blinding, hardening power of sin upon the mind is that and that alone, which keeps back your soul from peace with God. " And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Positive promises are to believers ; but such invitations as this, which are plentiful in the Scriptures, are kindly given to you all ; and there is no reserve in them, to awaken in your breasts the cold suspicion that God is insincere.

2. To those of you who have believed in the Son of God. Believing as we do in the doctrine of election, as it has been stated in these comments on the words in the text, we do not, and may we not, either in thought or in practice, separate the end from the way. "So run, that ye may obtain." God who determines the end, determines the way also. The Creator of man, He willed man to be happy; but He willed him to be happy in His own way, the only way in which Adam could attain the end of his being. And so it is with regard to the great felicity of being conformed unto the image of the Son of God. The knowledge that this end was determined, did not make the apostle Paul less strenuous in the way that leads up to it. "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3, 13, 14). It is not indeed "of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy:" but it is not without the willing and the running of those who obtain mercy of God.

It is sometimes objected to the doctrine of election, that it does not tend to holiness in those who hold it. Finding that it is not of works, the inference is, that there is nothing to be done, and the neglect of duty is the consequence. We do not, my dear friends, understand this to be the tendency of the doctrine we contend for; and let us prove by our conversation that it is not. The doctrine gives us the hope of being conformed unto the image of the Son; and I do not see how the hope of being conformed unto the image of the Son of God, tends to make us disconformed unto Him. It appears to us to have the opposite tendency; and I hope it will have the opposite effect upon us all. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see Him as He is" (1 John 3, 2). And mark what follows: "And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." The meaning of which is, that every one who hopes to be like unto Christ, will imitate and follow His example. The hope to have the sum and substance of our felicity, in being conformed unto the image of Christ, in the world to come, while we have no aspirations after His image here, no following of His footsteps, no practical imitation of His bright example in our conduct in this world, is inconsistent and fallacious. He prayed the Father, "Sanctify them through

Thy truth ; Thy word is truth ; ” before He prayed, “ I will that they also whom Thou hast given Me be with Me where I am ; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me ” (John 17, 17, 24). And these two parts of His prayer, coincide with the decisive words of His servant the apostle, with which we shall conclude the subject we have had in hand : “ Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.”

APPENDIX.

[Mr. Seacome Ellison, of Walton-on-the-Hill, Liverpool, was for many years a member of the Society holding what is called Johnsonian views, and worshipping in Comus Street Chapel, Liverpool. The earlier part of his life was a strenuous one, as a seaman and afterwards captain in the Merchant Service trading from Liverpool. He was taken prisoner by a French Privateer during the war, but escaped from the prison at Bitche in which he was confined. Mr. Ellison was an educated man and had a facile pen. He wrote an elaborate book on Baptism in 1845, in which he included a Synopsis of the views of the Society as he understood and adopted them. It may be useful as showing to any enquirer the teaching of the Johnsonians as held by a layman simply as an intelligent member of the body. The Synopsis follows.—EDITOR].

SYNOPSIS.

They conceive of unity of judgment in the truth of the Gospel, as most important to the building up of the Christian Church ; and that no modification of the ordinances of the gospel can be permitted ; for which reason they do not hold fellowship with any other denomination of Baptists.

They believe that immersion in water is the only ordinance taught in the scriptures, by which a believer can make his first profession of faith in Christ ; consequently they do not recognise any unbaptised person as a member of Christ's body. They receive individuals, after baptism, as members, into the church by the ordinance of laying on of hands, with prayer, in faith of the gift of the promised Spirit. By the latter ordinance, also, ministers and officers of the church are inducted into office.

Their view of the doctrine concerning the one true and living God, is not in agreement with the Trinitarian scheme, as generally held. They are of opinion that the characters by which God has revealed Himself are, as in relation to us—that the Father is God, the invisible and incomprehensible Jehovah, that the Son is this glorious Being in manifestation in our nature, as “ the Word

made flesh ; " that the Holy Spirit is the same God in his spiritual operations, " the Lord is that Spirit ; " and that the character of Christ Jesus, as the Son of God, is not a character independent of the human nature in which He was " God manifest in the flesh."

They reject the doctrine of original sin as commonly understood, while they admit that children are born into the world destitute of the original perfection of human nature. But they deny that the sin of Adam brings guilt upon the conscience, or infuses a moral depravity, which necessarily leads them to acts of personal transgression, believing that the final condemnation of the wicked will be the effect of their own personal sin, altogether independently of the sin of Adam.

They believe in the eternal happiness of all children who die before they are capable of understanding the evil of sin, and of all adults who have passed their whole lives in such a state of mental imbecility as to have been incapable of discriminating between good and evil.

They believe that the threatening of death to Adam, in the event of his violation of the divine command, had respect to his whole person ; that the whole human race would have remained under the power of death, had not God interposed by His promise of the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head ; that by Christ, the second Adam, the free gift might come " upon all men unto justification of life ; " that the everlasting existence of the human race is through the resurrection of Christ, and consequently that the soul of man is not naturally immortal. *

They believe, in particular, unconditional election ; that God chose His people in Christ before the foundation of the world, irrespective of sin or other contingency, and that God would have manifested Himself in the human nature had sin never had a being ; but in consequence of the introduction of sin, Christ appeared in a suffering state, and gave Himself for the redemption of the church, and also " a ransom for all." Therefore salvation is proclaimed to the whole human race, in the most comprehensive acceptation of these words. To the same extent, they believe that God wills the salvation of all men, and that the gospel is to be " preached to every creature which is under heaven," by which preaching all men are called to repent and believe the gospel.

They believe that salvation is by grace alone, through faith, but that the grace of God in the soul is inseparable from holiness of life and conversation ; that the gospel gives unto them which

receive it in truth, the full assurance of hope in eternal salvation ; that every believer knows he is a child of God, and that therefore doubt is inconsistent with such assurance.

They believe that Christ shall reign by the power of His gospel during the last thousand years of the earth's existence in its present state ; and that afterwards, the heavens and the earth which now are, will be destroyed by fire, and then made anew, when all the saints, in a state of resurrection from the dead, will reign with Christ upon the new earth a thousand years, and that after the thousand years are expired, the resurrection of the wicked and the final judgment of the world will take place.

They believe that it is the bounden duty of all the followers of Christ to be subject to the reigning powers, without regard to any particular line of politics ; and to refrain from joining with any to overturn existing establishments.

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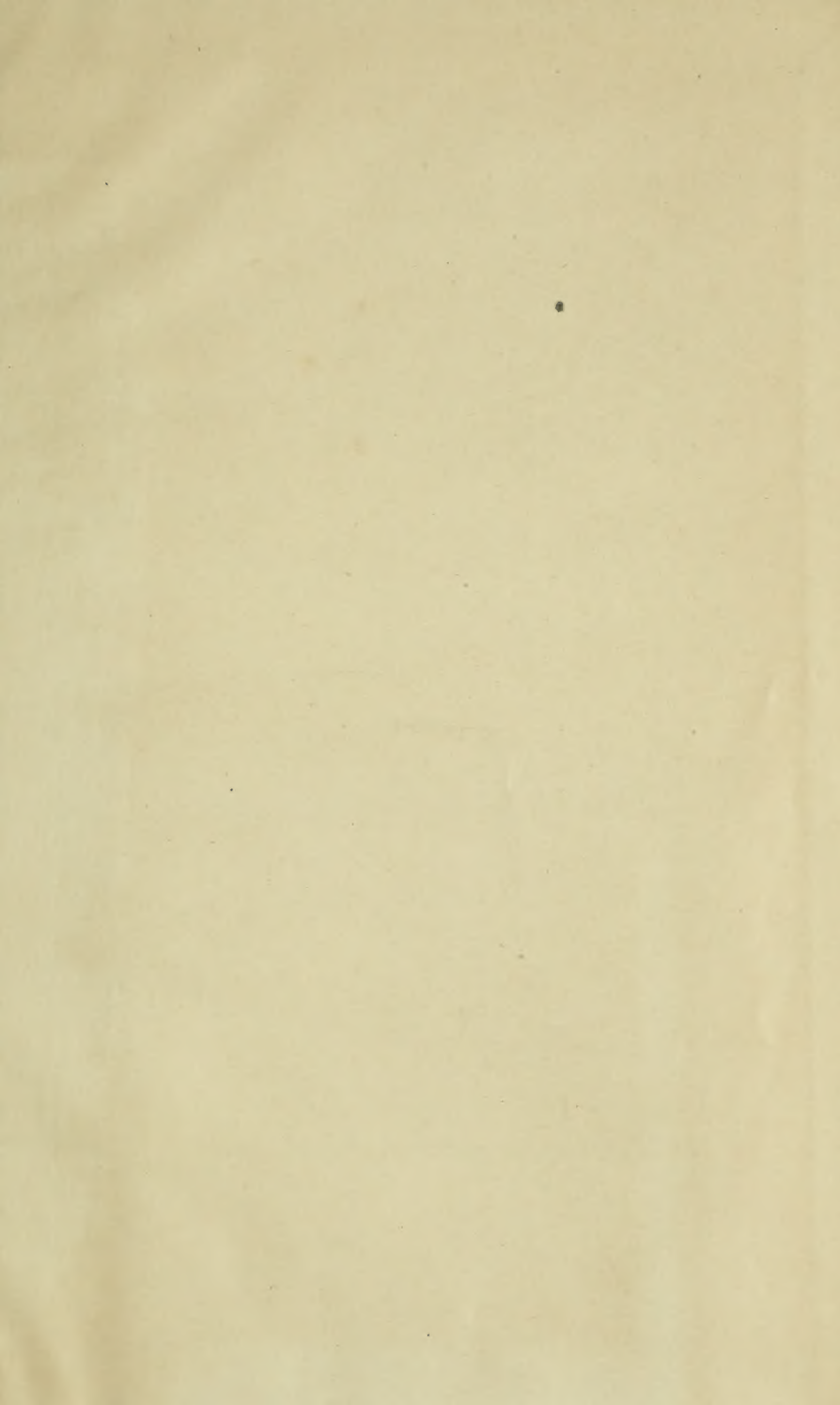
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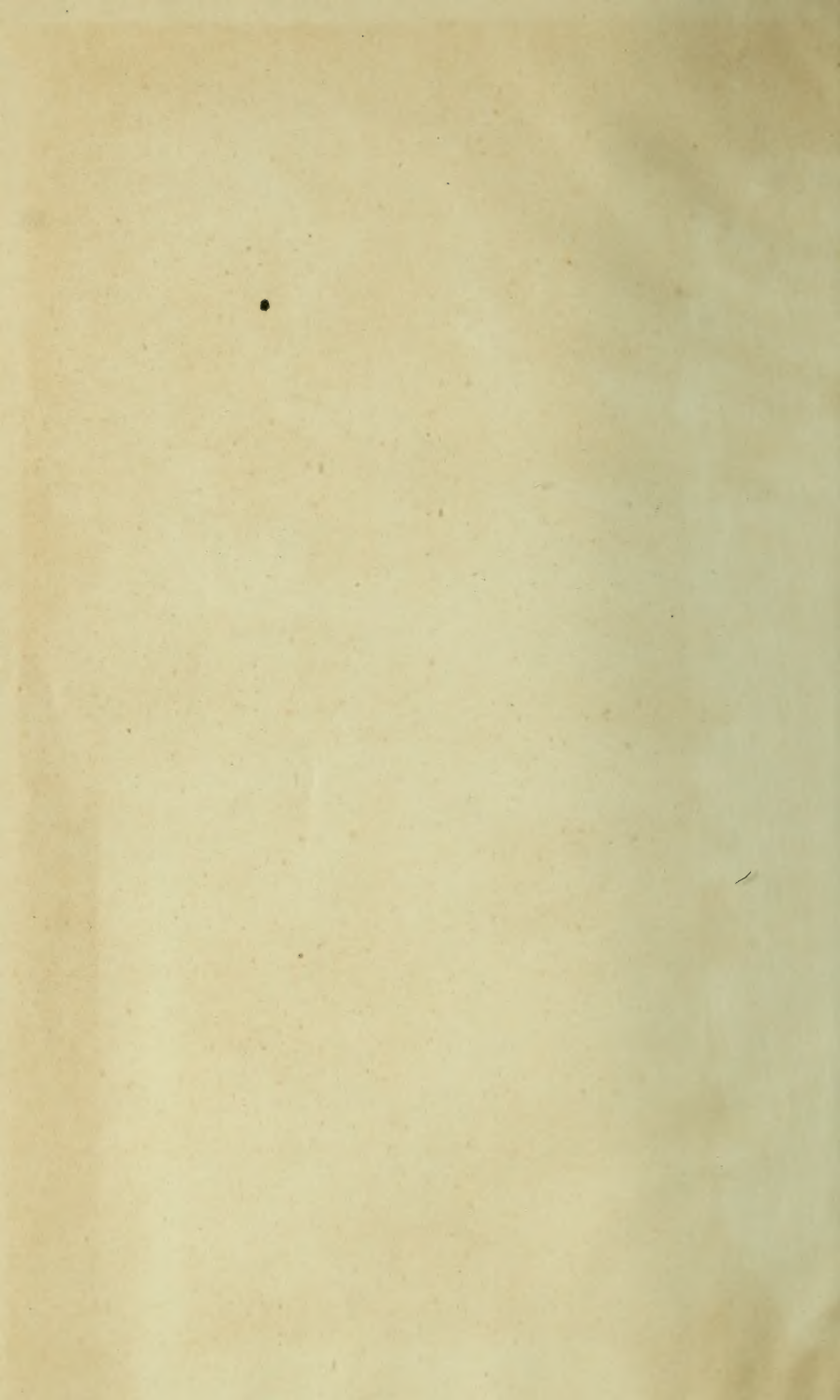
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